

# SEA STATEMENT

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FOR THE

## PORTARLINGTON JOINT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

for: Laois and Offaly County Councils



by: CAAS Ltd.



**JULY 2025**

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# Section 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction and Legislative Context

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement for the Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031.

SEA is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely environmental effects of implementing a plan, or other strategic action, in order to ensure that these effects are appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making on a par with economic and social considerations.

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27<sup>th</sup> June 2001, on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, referred to hereafter as the SEA Directive, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors, including land use. The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish Law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. The Regulations have been amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

## 1.2 Content of the SEA Statement

Where SEA is undertaken, the Regulations require that a Statement is made available to the public and the competent environmental authorities after the making of the Plan.

This Statement is referred to as an SEA Statement.

The SEA Statement is required to include information summarising:

- a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan;
- b) how the following have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan:
  - the environmental report,
  - submissions and observations made to the planning authority on the Draft Plan and Environmental Report, and
  - any transboundary consultations (these are not relevant to this SEA).
- c) the reasons for choosing the Plan in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- d) the measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan.

## 1.3 Implications of SEA for the Plan

SEA has been undertaken on the Plan and the findings of the SEA are expressed in an Environmental Report, the first published version of which accompanied the Draft Plan on public display. The Environmental Report was updated in order to take account of changes to the original Draft Plan that were made on foot of submissions and recommendations in the submissions.

Laois and Offaly County Councils have been provided with the findings of SEA output during their consideration of the Plan and before the Plan was adopted.

## **Section 2 How Environmental Considerations were integrated into the Plan**

### **2.1 Overview**

Environmental considerations were presented to the Council for its consideration through:

1. Consultations;
2. Communication of environmental sensitivities throughout the SEA process;
3. Appropriate Assessment;
4. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
5. Strategic work undertaken by the Councils to ensure contribution towards environmental protection and sustainable development;
6. Consideration of alternatives;
7. Integration of environmental considerations; and
8. Integration of individual SEA and AA provisions into the Plan.

All parts of the Plan-preparation process were informed by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes - this includes the preparation of the Draft Plan, Proposed Material Alterations and Further Modifications.

### **2.2 Consultations**

As environmental authorities identified under the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations, as amended, the following authorities were sent SEA scoping notices indicating that submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report could be made to the Council: the Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Environment, Climate and Communications; Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Galway County Council; Roscommon County Council; Westmeath County Council; Meath County Council; Kildare County Council; Carlow County Council; Kilkenny County Council; and Tipperary County Council.

Detail is provided in Section 3.3 on submissions that were made on the Draft Plan

and/or the SEA Environmental Report while they were on public display.

### **2.3 Communication of environmental sensitivities throughout the SEA process**

Environmental considerations were integrated into the Plan before it was placed on public display. Individual sensitivities that were considered by the Planning Team preparing the Plan included the following:

- European Sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas);
- Other Ecological Designations;
- Status of Surface and Ground Waters;
- Various entries to the Water Framework Directive's Register of Protected Areas;
- Groundwater Vulnerability;
- Water Services Capacity, Performance and Demand;
- Cultural heritage (archaeological and architectural) sensitivities; and
- Landscape Designations.

A number of these sensitivities are mapped on Figures 2.1 to 2.3.

### **2.4 Appropriate Assessment**

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening and Stage 2 AA have been undertaken alongside the Plan. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC). The conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not affect the integrity of any European Site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.<sup>1</sup> The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA has taken place

<sup>1</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: (a) no alternative solution available, (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

concurrently and the findings of the AA have informed the SEA.

## **2.5 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment**

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan. The requirement for SFRA is provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014. The preparation of the Plan, SEA and SFRA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the SFRA have informed both the Plan and the SEA.

## **2.6 Strategic work undertaken by the Councils to ensure contribution towards environmental protection and sustainable development**

Far in advance of the placing of the Draft Plan on public display and adopting the Plan, Laois and Offaly County Councils undertook various works in order to inform the preparation of the Plan.

Strategic work undertaken by the Councils includes background work in relation to Plan provisions, including those relating to:

- Core Strategy;
- Climate change;
- Town centre revitalisation;
- Placemaking;
- Housing;
- Economic development;
- Transport and movement;
- Community services development;
- Built heritage; and
- Biodiversity and natural heritage.

The undertaking of the SEA process was part of this strategic work and contributed towards the integration of environmental considerations into individual Plan provisions as detailed under Section 2.9.

## **2.7 Consideration of Alternatives**

Consideration of the environmental effects arising from a variety of different alternatives for the Plan (see Section 4) has contributed towards the protection and management of the environment within the Plan area.

## **2.8 Integration of environmental considerations into Zoning of the Plan**

Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach.

Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Laois and Offaly County Development Plans.

The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input seeks to facilitate zoning that will help to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated sensitivity, such as in areas at risk of flooding or areas of elevated cultural/built heritage, landscape, water or ecological sensitivity.

## **2.9 Integration of individual provisions into the text of the Plan**

Various provisions have been integrated into the text of the Plan through the Plan-preparation and SEA, SFRA and AA processes. Both the Planning and the assessment teams contributed towards the mitigation which was developed over multiple iterations and was

informed by, inter alia, various communications through the SEA, AA and SFRA processes. Table 2.1 links key mitigation measure(s) to the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated. The measures generally benefit multiple environmental components i.e. a measure providing for the protection of biodiversity, flora and fauna could beneficially impact upon the minimisation of flood risk and the protection of human health, for example.

## **2.10 Integration of individual provisions into the text of the County Development Plans**

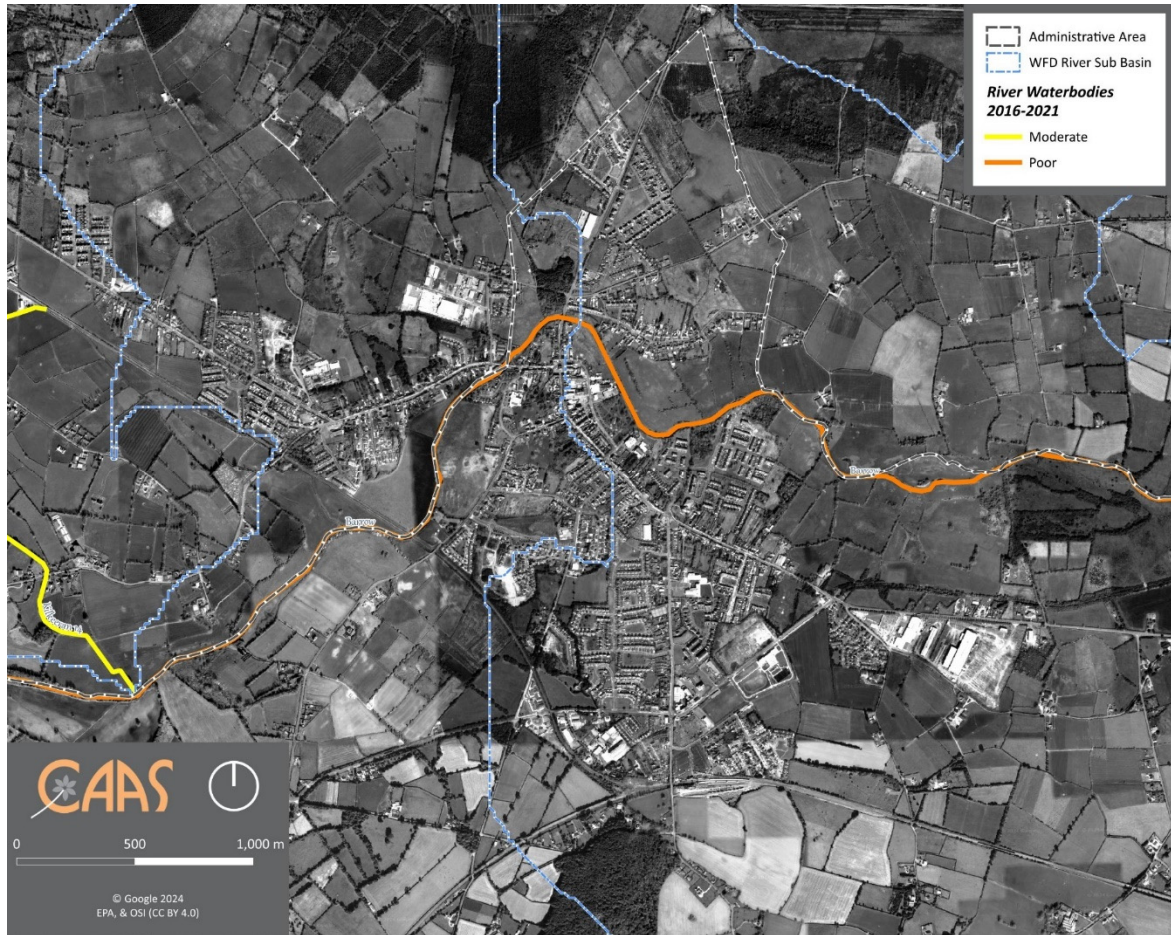
In addition to the individual provisions integrated into the text of the Joint Local Area Plan, individual provisions relating to environmental protection and management have been integrated into the existing, already in force, Laois and Offaly County Development Plans. These measures, which must be complied with by development under the Joint Local Area Plan, are identified alongside the Joint Local Area Plan measures on Table 2.1.



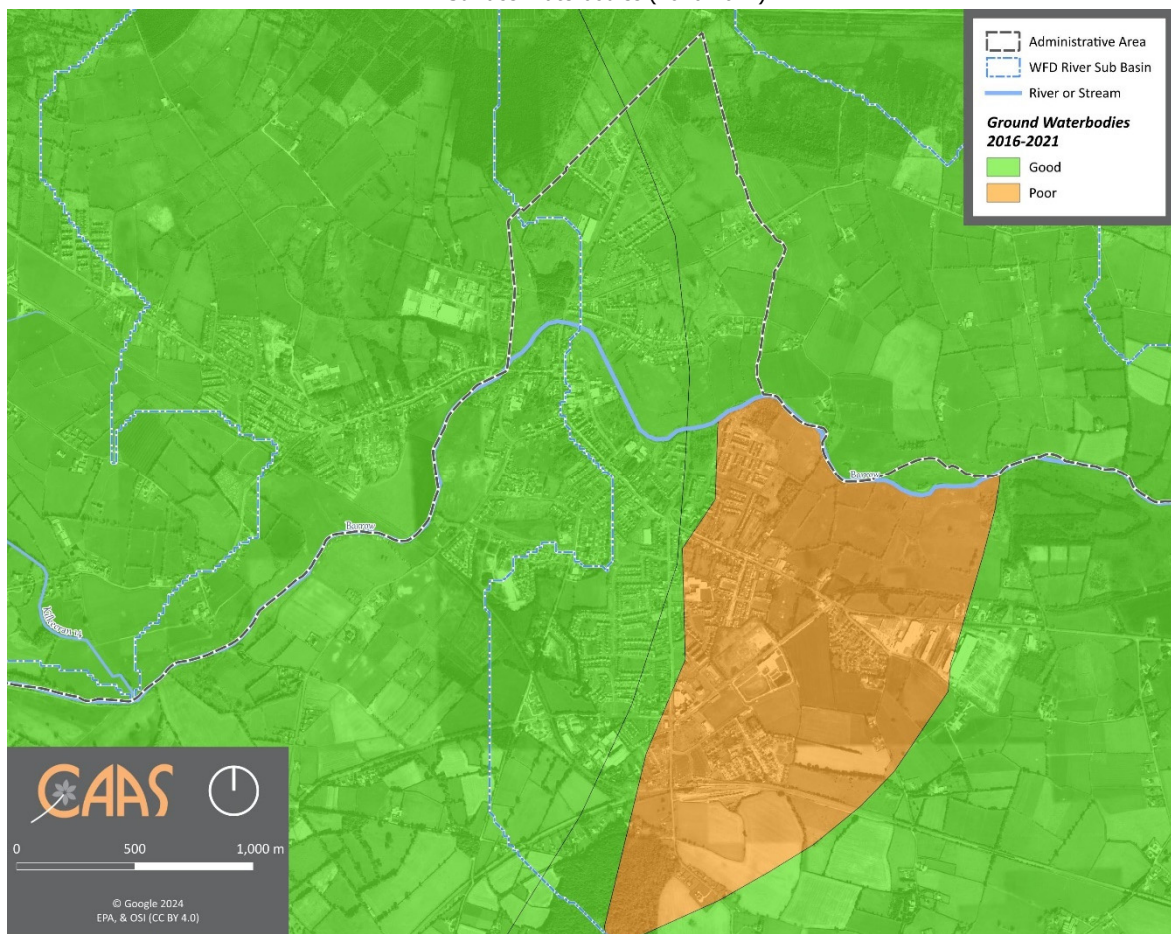
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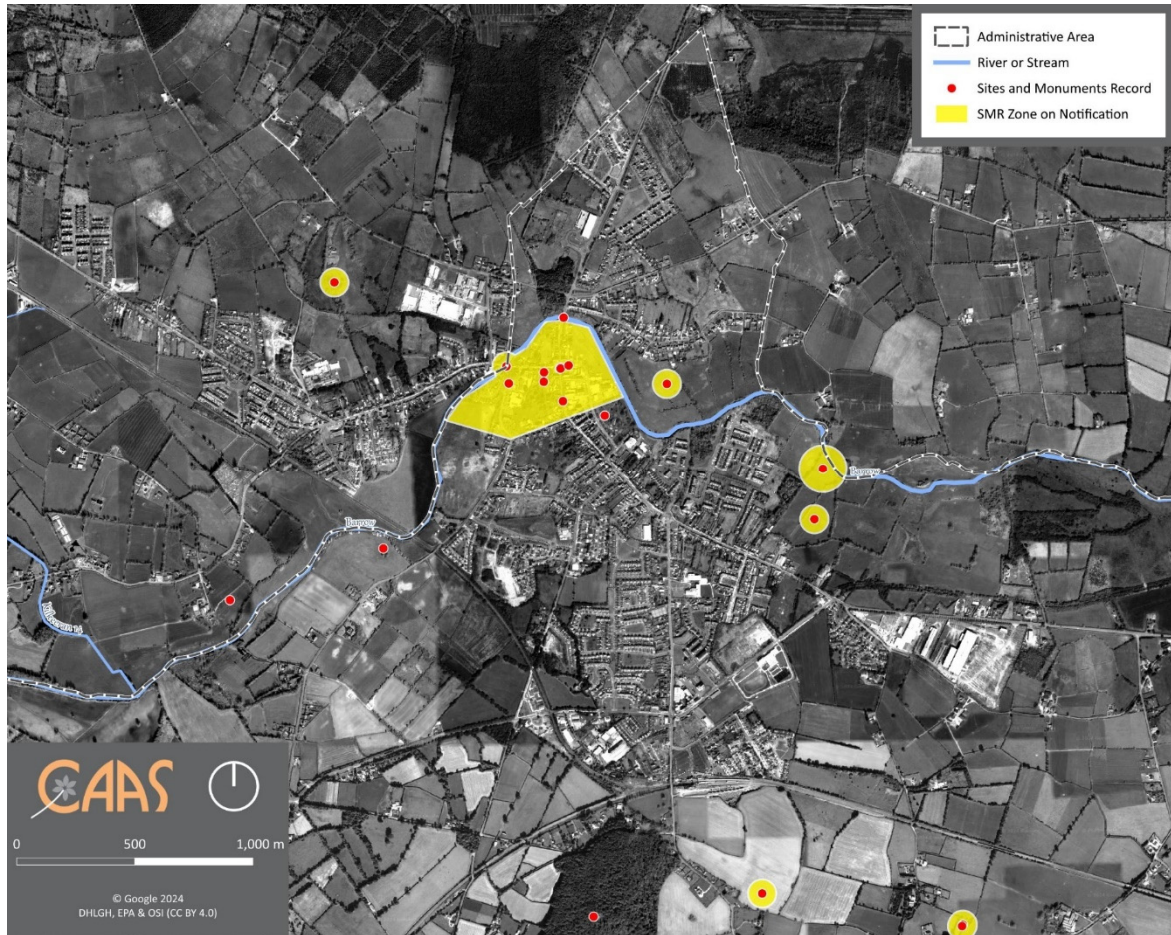
WFD Surface Waterbodies (2016-2021)



Groundwater Vulnerability

**Figure 2.2 Selection Environmental Sensitivities taken into account (2 of 3)**





Archaeological Heritage



Architectural Heritage

**Figure 2.3 Selection Environmental Sensitivities taken into account (3 of 3)**

**Table 2.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan**

| Topic                      | Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated | Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:   | Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:   |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Various – see below</b> | Various – see below                                    | <p>Subsection 1.1 Background:<br/>It is a specific provision of this Plan to ensure that all of the provisions from the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 identified in the SEA Environmental Report and/or AA Natura Impact Report that accompany this Plan shall be complied with throughout the implementation of this Plan.</p> <p>Chapter 11 Transport and Movement<br/>The identification of transport infrastructure proposals in this Plan and associated Local Transport Plan, including locations and any associated mapping, that is not already permitted or provided for by existing plans/programmes/etc. is non-binding and indicative.</p> <p>New transport infrastructure will be considered subject to environmental constraints, including those related to habitats and potential impacts (e.g. disturbance from lighting). This will include minimising river crossings, avoiding sensitive habitats, not increasing barriers to flood waters and sustainable design and construction techniques.</p> <p>Proposals would need to be subject to a Corridor and Route Selection Process, as relevant and as per Objective TRANS 15 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and Chapter 8.6.4 "Corridor &amp; Route Selection Process" of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p> <p>Proposed interventions will be required to demonstrate that they are consistent with all relevant legislative requirements.</p> | <p><b>Laois County Development Plan</b><br/>Overarching Core Strategy Policy Objectives<br/>CS 03 In the assessment of development proposals, to take account of transport corridors, environmental carrying capacity, availability and/or capacity to provide waste water and water supply services, potential to conflict with Water Framework Directive objectives, potential to impact on the integrity of European sites and Annexed Habitats and species, features of biodiversity value including ecological networks, impact on landscape and visual characteristics, education and other socioeconomic objectives<br/>Ecosystems Approach Policy Objectives<br/>CS 35 Promote an Ecosystem Services Approach in the preparation of lower-level plans, strategies and Development Management<br/>CS 36 Contribute, as practicable, towards achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which came into force in 2016<br/>NRE 3 Ensure the provision, where feasible, of electricity cables been located underground, especially in the urban environment, and generally within areas of public open space. Where undergrounding of cables is being pursued, proposals should demonstrate that environmental impacts including the following are minimised:<br/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat loss as a result of removal of field boundaries and hedgerows (right of way preparation) followed by topsoil stripping (to ensure machinery does not destroy soil structure and drainage properties);</li> <li>• Short to medium term impacts on the landscape where, for example, hedgerows are encountered;</li> <li>• Impacts on underground archaeology;</li> <li>• Impacts on soil structure and drainage; and</li> <li>• Impacts on surface waters as a result of sedimentation.</li> </ul> </p> <p>Volume 2 Environmental considerations and imitations in the types of uses<br/>There are a wide range of land use types identified under each of the Land Use Zoning Objectives. Proposals for development will need to demonstrate compliance with the various written provisions of the Plan, as relevant, including those relating to environmental protection and management. Environmental considerations, such as those related to elevated levels of flood risk or European site ecological designations, may limit the types of uses that may be possible at certain sites. Prospective applicants are encouraged to engage with the planning authority at the earliest opportunity to seek guidance as to the appropriateness of emerging proposals.</p> <p>TRANS 15 It is a Policy Objective that where projects for new roads or other linear projects, identified in Chapter 10 and Volume 2, are not already provided for by existing plans/programme or are not already permitted, that the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken where appropriate, for relevant new road infrastructure in two stages:<br/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection; and</li> <li>• Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection.</li> </ul> </p> <p><b>Offaly County Development Plan</b><br/>Ecosystems Services<br/>In preparing this Plan and developing policies and objectives, the Council have followed these Ecosystem Services Approach principles:<br/> a) Consideration of natural systems - by using knowledge of interactions in nature and how ecosystems function (including in Chapter 3 Climate Action and Energy).<br/> b) Taking into account the services that ecosystems provide - including those that underpin social and economic well-being, such as flood and climate regulation (including in Chapter 3 Climate Action and Energy), resources for food, fibre or fuel (including in Chapter 5 Economic Development Strategy), or for recreation, culture and quality of life (including in Chapter 4 Biodiversity and Landscape, Chapter 6 Tourism and Recreational Development, and Chapter 10 Built Heritage).<br/> c) Involving people - those who benefit from the ecosystem services and those managing them need to be involved in decisions that affect them. Public consultation has informed the preparation of the Plan.</p> <p>The Council will promote an Ecosystem Services Approach, following the above principles, in its decision-making processes, including those relating to the preparation of statutory land use plans.</p> <p>In recognition of the need to manage natural capital, provisions have been integrated into the Plan that will contribute towards management of air quality, noise pollution, light pollution, water quality and integrated catchment management. United Nations Sustainability Goals<br/>Sustainability is at the heart of planning. Since 2015, Ireland has been a signatory for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as outlined in Figure 1.2 and which frame national agendas and policies to 2030. The following Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken for relevant new infrastructure, however this would not apply to national road schemes which are progressed in accordance with statutory processes and TII publications, including various TII Planning Guidelines for Assessment of Environmental Impacts that include headings such as "Constraints Study", "Route Corridor Selection" and "Environmental Impact Assessment:<br/> Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection<br/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental constraints (including those identified in Section 4 of the accompanying SEA Environmental Report) and opportunities (such as existing linear infrastructure) will assist in the identification of possible route corridor options;</li> </ul> </p> |



SEA Statement for the Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| Topic                                   | Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated                                     | Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:   | Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:  |
|---|--|--|---|
|   |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially feasible corridors within which infrastructure could be accommodated will be identified and these corridors assessed. The selection of the preferred route corridor will avoid constraints and meet opportunities to the optimum extent, as advised by the relevant specialists; and</li> <li>• In addition to the constraints identified above, site-specific field data may be required to identify the most appropriate corridors.</li> </ul> <p>Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially feasible routes within the preferred corridor will be identified and assessed. The selection of preferred routes will avoid constraints and meet opportunities to the optimum extent, as advised by the relevant specialists, taking into account project level information and potential mitigation measures that are readily achievable;</li> <li>• In addition to the constraints identified above, site specific field data may be required to identify the most appropriate routes; and</li> <li>• In addition to environmental considerations, the identification of route corridors and the refinement of route lines is likely to be informed by other considerations.</li> </ul> <p>Construction and Environmental Management Plan</p> <p>Construction Environment Management Plans (CEMPs) shall be prepared for larger scale projects and this requirement shall be assessed on a case by case basis as part of the development management process. Such plans shall incorporate relevant mitigation measures contained in any accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment Report or Appropriate Assessment and in this Development Plan. CEMPs shall typically provide details of intended construction practice for the proposed development, including where applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location and details of site compounds, refuse storage areas, construction site offices and staff facilities, site security fencing and hoardings, on-site staff car parking;</li> <li>• Details of construction traffic - timing and routing, directional signage, measures to obviate queuing, alternative arrangements for pedestrians and vehicles, and measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris;</li> <li>• Details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels;</li> <li>• Containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained; such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater;</li> <li>• Disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil, including compliance with 2006 Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects, Department of the Environment;</li> <li>• A water and sediment management plan, providing for means to ensure that surface water runoff is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local water courses or drains;</li> <li>• Details of a water quality monitoring and sampling plan;</li> <li>• If peat is encountered - a peat storage, handling and reinstatement management plan;</li> <li>• Measures adopted during construction to prevent the spread of invasive species (such as Japanese Knotweed);</li> <li>• Appointment of an ecological clerk of works at site investigation, preparation and construction phases; and</li> <li>• Details of appropriate mitigation measures for lighting specifically designed to minimise impacts to biodiversity, including bats.</li> </ul> <p>DMS-107 Undergrounding of Services</p> <p>All services, including ESB, telephone and television cables shall be placed underground, where possible. Service buildings or structures shall be sited as unobtrusively as possible and must be screened.</p> <p>Proposals should demonstrate that environmental impacts including the following are minimised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat loss as a result of removal of field boundaries and hedgerows (right of way preparation) followed by topsoil stripping (to ensure machinery does not destroy soil structure and drainage properties);</li> <li>• Short to medium-term impacts on the landscape where, for example, hedgerows are encountered;</li> <li>• Impacts on underground and underwater archaeology;</li> <li>• Impacts on soil structure and drainage; and</li> <li>• Impacts on surface waters as a result of sedimentation.</li> </ul> <p>Reasonable Alternatives and Existing Infrastructural Assets</p> <p>It is Council policy to require that environmental assessments should address reasonable alternatives for the location of new energy developments, and where existing infrastructural assets such as sub-stations, power lines and roads already exist within the proposed development areas, then such assets should be considered for sustainable use by the proposed development where the assets have capacity to absorb the new development. Environmental considerations and Limitations in the types of uses</p> <p>There are a wide range of land uses identified under each of the Land Use Zoning Objectives. Proposals for development will need to demonstrate compliance with the various written provisions of the Plan, as relevant, including those relating to environmental protection and management. Environmental considerations, such as those related to elevated levels of flood risk or European site ecological designations, may limit the types of uses that may be possible at certain sites. Prospective applicants are encouraged to engage with the Planning Authority at the earliest opportunity to seek guidance as to the appropriateness of emerging proposals.</p> |
| <b>Biodiversity and flora and fauna</b> | Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure: | Policy 15.1<br>Prohibit any development that would be harmful to or that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats and/or disturbance of species in any Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of | <p><b>Laois County Development Plan</b></p> <p>CS 20 Promote higher densities at appropriate locations, owing to position on public transport network where appropriate to do so having regard to Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas (DEHLG, 2009) and ensure that any plan or project associated with the provision of new housing is subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive, and subsequent assessment as required;</p> <p>CA ST 1 Protect and enhance the County's floodplains subject to flooding as "green infrastructure" where appropriate and subject to compliance with</p>   |

SEA Statement for the Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| Topic | Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated  | Joint Local Area Plan measures, including:  | Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:  |
|-------|---|---|---|
|       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna;</li> <li>• Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and</li> <li>• Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds (e.g. swifts) and bats.</li> </ul> | <p>Conservation (SAC) and candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), Natural Heritage Area (NHA) and Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA).<br/>Policy 15.2<br/>Promote and support (a) the development of Derryounce Lakes and Trails as an important local amenity and key tourism asset and (b) the implementation of the recommendations of the 10-year plan for Derryounce.<br/>Policy 15.3<br/>Protect, enhance and further develop the Green Infrastructure network in Portarlington, with a particular emphasis on connecting the recreational areas of Derryounce Lakes and Trails, the River Barrow and the People's Park; and strengthen green infrastructure linkages to the wider regional network.<br/>Policy 15.4<br/>Protect, manage, and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape, and environment of Portarlington in recognition of its importance as a natural resource that can contribute towards sustainable urban drainage, flood management, and climate action.<br/>Policy 15.6<br/>Support the conservation and enhancement of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC, and to protect the SAC from any plans and projects that are likely to have a significant effect on the coherence or integrity of the designated site, in accordance with relevant EU environmental directives and applicable national legislation, policies, plans and guidelines.<br/>Objective 15.1<br/>Investigate the feasibility of providing a bridge crossing and walkway over the River Barrow in the indicative location to the south west of the town, as shown in the Map 2: Objectives, taking into account environmental sensitivities identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the Laois County Development Plan and the Offaly County Development Plan. The development of any bridge crossing and walkway proposal shall be subject to the requirements of the EIA, Habitats, Water Framework and Flood Directives where relevant and appropriate.</p> | <p>the Habitats Directive;<br/>RH 4 Provide for sustainable rural housing in the county in accordance with the Sustainable Rural Housing: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2005) , EPA Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses (2009) and ensure that any plan or project associated with the provision of new housing is subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive, and subsequent assessment as required;<br/>NRPO 4 Prepare an Open Space Plan for the County having regard to the town parks, riverside walks and other amenity spaces and resources and ensure that any plan or project associated with open space planning or tourism is subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive, and subsequent assessment as required<br/>NRPO 7 Investigate the feasibility of the following specific recreation and leisure projects subject to the Habitats and Birds Directives:<br/>• Support the ongoing development of an athletic track, including provision of dressing rooms and tartan resurface in Portlaoise;<br/>• Investigate and facilitate where appropriate the provision of strategic greenways throughout the county.<br/>• Facilitate where appropriate the provision of additional handball facilities throughout the county.<br/>NRPO 13 Facilitate the development of greenways / blueways along the main waterways through the county – Grand Canal, River Barrow and River Nore and their tributaries subject to the Habitats and Birds Directives and the proper planning and development of the areas<br/>ABT 2 Support in principle and investigate the feasibility of, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive, developing and marketing off-road Slieve Bloom Mountain Biking Trail by Coillte, Mountmellick –Portlaoise – Abbeyleix Greenway (and potential extensions onto Portarlington to connect with the Offaly Greenway network) and Durrow Green Network Cycle Trail in co-operation with relevant stakeholders including Durrow Development Forum.<br/>ABT 3 Develop on-road cycle trails in the Slieve Blooms along existing lightly-trafficked roads in partnership with cycling clubs, Offaly County Council, Laois Sports Partnership, Laois Partnership Company and the National Trails Office, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive<br/>ABT 6 Promote and investigate the feasibility of, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives, sustainable developing and improving of facilities and infrastructure supporting water based tourism activities, (including shore side interpretive centres and jetties). Development proposals outside settlement centres will be required to demonstrate a need to locate in the area and will be required to ensure that the ecological integrity and water quality of the river or lake, including lakeshore and riparian habitats, is not adversely affected by the development<br/>TM 17 Where relevant, the Council and those receiving permission for development under the Plan shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate<br/>CH 2 Take responsibility for the development of a more sustainable tourism industry which minimises adverse impacts on local communities, the built heritage, landscapes, habitats and species; leaving them undiminished as a resource for future generations, while supporting social and economic prosperity<br/>Support the development and marketing of the Barrow Blueway and facilitate related commercial opportunities in Vicarstown, Portarlington, Graiguecullen and Portlaoise, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive<br/>NH 2 Support the development and marketing of the Erkina River Blueway in association with all relevant stakeholders and facilitate related commercial opportunities in the area, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive<br/>NH 3 Promote and facilitate the continued development of the Slieve Bloom Mountains bike trail as a key tourism asset for the county and as part of the tourism offer on the Slieve Bloom Mountains, in conjunction with Offaly County Council.<br/>In addition, it is the Council policy to (i) promote the further development of walking trails on the mountains, (ii) connect to and develop Clonaslee, Camross, Coolrain and Rosenalis as a service hubs for the area and (iii) promote and facilitate links to / from other existing and proposed greenways, blueways and peatways (iv) Support the development of visitor centre facilities in Baunreagh, , subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directive<br/>RL 2 Facilitate the development of agriculture while ensuring that natural waters, wildlife habitats and conservation areas are protected from pollution.<br/>RL 7 Encourage, subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives, access to forestry including private forestry for amenity and educational purposes including the provision of walking routes, cycling routes, mountain biking routes, mountain trails, nature trails and orienteering;<br/>RL 14 Support in principle the expansion of the aggregates and concrete products industry which offers opportunity for employment and economic development generally subject to environmental , traffic and planning considerations and ensure that any plan or project associated with extractive industry is subject to Appropriate assessment screening in compliance with the Habitats Direction and subsequent assessment as required , applicants for planning permission shall have regard to the GSI-ICF Quarrying Guidelines;<br/>TRANS 45 Investigate the feasibility of developing a National Scale Centre for Off-Road Mountain-Biking in the Slieve Bloom Mountains, subject to planning permission &amp; the Habitats' and Birds Directives;<br/>TRANS 46 Continue to audit, maintain and promote walking trails and walking events in the Slieve Blooms, subject to planning permission &amp; the Habitats' and Birds Directives;<br/>TRANS 47 Designate the following graded on-road cycling trails in the Slieve Blooms; install related signage and improve road surfaces along these trails, as resources allow; produce trail maps and market the trails , subject to the Habitats' and Birds Directives; H1. Cut Cycle Climb; H2. Wolftrap Cycle Climb; H3. Glendine Cycle Climb; H4. Mountrath-Clonaslee Trail; H5. Camross Coolrain Trail; H6. Castletown Mountrath Trail<br/>TRANS 51 Establish a new Woodenbridge Walking Trail linking Durrow and Ballacolla, subject to the Habitats' Directive</p> |



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|       |  | <p>Objective 15.2<br/>Support and facilitate the objectives of the Portarlington Town Park Masterplan.</p> <p>Objective 15.3<br/>Support and facilitate the recommendations of the Derryounce 10-year Development Plan.</p> <p>Objective 15.4<br/>Seek to integrate, where possible, existing green infrastructure into new development proposals to strengthen connectivity.</p> <p>Objective 15.5<br/>Support the development of a visitor centre and associated visitor facilities at Derryounce and its potential to be trailhead for the Midlands Cycling Destination.</p> <p>Objective 15.6<br/>Provide high quality directional and way finding signage for green infrastructure within Portarlington and its hinterlands.</p> <p>Objective 15.7<br/>Enhance and develop essential infrastructure to support the growth of Derryounce as a visitor attraction.</p> <p>Objective 15.8<br/>Seek to preserve and protect trees that have a particular local amenity, conservation or landscape value and require the planting of new native tree species in all new developments.</p> <p>Objective 15.9<br/>Promote a network of paths and cycle tracks to enhance accessibility to the Green Infrastructure network, while ensuring that the design and operation of the routes respond to the ecological protection needs of each site.</p> <p>Objective 15.10<br/>Promote, protect, and enhance sustainable and appropriate access to natural heritage in Portarlington and recognise the important role of natural heritage in the area, in terms of enhancing the image of the town and contributing to quality of life and wellbeing, economic growth, tourism and recreation.</p> <p>Objective 15.11<br/>Protect and preserve landscape features which significantly contribute to green infrastructure in Portarlington, including</p> | <p>BNH 23 Encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries and laneways, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.</p> <p>LCA 17 Maintain the rivers throughout the county whilst ensuring that all works are carried out subject to appropriate environmental assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, in respect of any proposed development likely to have an impact on a designated natural heritage site, site proposed to be designated and any additional sites that may be designated during the period of this Plan</p> <p>LCA 18 Preserve riverside historic features and their landscape settings. Conserve valuable habitats focused on and around river corridors and estuaries including European and national designations</p> <p>LCA 19 Recognise the potential constraints on development created by river flood plains and the value of these flood plains as increasingly rare habitats</p> <p>LCA 24 Conserve valuable habitats including any European and national designations</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Biodiversity and Designated Sites</p> <p>BNH 1 Protect, conserve, and seek to enhance the county's biodiversity and ecological connectivity</p> <p>BNH 2 Conserve and protect habitats and species listed in the Annexes of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (as amended) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2010 (as amended) and the Flora Protection Orders.</p> <p>BNH 3 Support and co-operate with statutory authorities and others in support of measures taken to manage proposed or designated sites in order to achieve their conservation objectives and maintain the favourable conservation status and conservation value of Sites under National and European legislation and International Agreements and maintain and /develop linkages between them where feasible.</p> <p>BNH 4 Protect and maintain the conservation value of all existing and future Natural Heritage Areas, Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Wildfowl Sanctuaries and Biogenetic Reserves in the county.</p> <p>BNH 5 Projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall not be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects)<sup>2</sup>. Screening for AAs and AAs undertaken shall take into account invasive species as relevant.</p> <p>BNH 6 Assess, in accordance with the relevant legislation, all proposed developments which are likely to have a significant effect (directly or through indirect or cumulative impact) on designated natural heritage sites, sites proposed for designation and protected species.</p> <p>BNH 7 Protect Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) from developments that would adversely affect their special interests.</p> <p>BNH 8 Recognise and protect the significant geological value of sites in County Laois and safeguard these sites, in consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland and in accordance with the National Heritage Plan and "Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry".</p> <p>BNH 9 Engage with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to ensure Integrated Management Plans are prepared for all Natura sites (or parts thereof) and ensure that plans are fully integrated with the County Development Plan and other plans and programmes, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to local communities.</p> <p>BNH 10 Support the objectives of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 by encouraging the planting of pollinator friendly trees and plants within grass verges along public roads and existing and future greenways, new hedgerows, public parks and public open spaces in towns and villages, including part of mixed use and residential developments</p> <p>BNH 11 Support measures to protect Swift population such as the creation of Swift nest cavities in all new commercial and public buildings (schools/libraries, etc).</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows</p> <p>BNH 25 Undertake a study within the lifetime of the Plan and for all Local Area Plans to document and map significant trees and groups of trees that require preservation and prepare Tree Preservation Orders for individual trees, groups of trees or woodland areas where expedient and in the interests of visual amenity, biodiversity and the environment.</p> <p>BNH 26 Protect individual trees, groups of trees and woodland in the interests of landscape conservation (including townscapes) and nature conservation as part of the development management process</p> <p>BNH 27 Protect existing hedgerows, particularly of historical and archaeological importance of townland boundaries, from unnecessary removal in order to preserve the rural character of the countryside and promote biodiversity</p> <p>BNH 28 Ensure that hedgerow removal to facilitate development is kept to an absolute minimum and, where unavoidable, a requirement for mitigation planting will be required comprising a hedge of similar length and species composition to the original, established as close as is practicable to the original and where possible linking in to existing adjacent hedges. Native plants of a local provenance should be used for any such planting</p> <p>BNH 29 Promote and develop urban forests in parkland and street trees in urban settlements to enhance public realm and increase tree canopy coverage and diversity.</p> <p>BNH 30 Ensure that hedgerow and mature tree removal to facilitate development is kept to an absolute minimum and, where unavoidable, a requirement for mitigation planting will be required comprising a hedge of similar length and species composition to the original, established as close as is</p> |

<sup>2</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.

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|       |  | <p>trees, hedgerows, woodlands, wetlands, watercourses, and other habitats.</p> <p>Objective 15.12<br/>Support the provision of the proposed Green Infrastructure projects outlined in Figure x.</p> <p>Objective 15.13<br/>Support and facilitate the objectives of a Derryounce Amenity Area.</p> <p>Objective 15.14<br/>Support and facilitate the provision of a walkway / cycleway to enable safe crossing of the Spa Street bridge and to enable access from the Derryounce Amenity Area onto any future walkway of the banks of the River Barrow.</p> <p>Objective 15.15<br/>Investigate the feasibility of a recreational pedestrian/ cycle route along the River Barrow.</p> <p>Objective 15.16<br/>Support and facilitate any future extensions to the People's Park.</p> <p>Objective 15.17<br/>Ensure the appropriate management of leisure activities in and adjacent to the River Barrow in order to ensure there is no impact on the distribution, populations or breeding grounds of the Qualifying Interests of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC.</p> <p>Policy 15.7<br/>To resist unnecessary removal of existing natural features, such as hedgerows and stands of trees in any new development proposals. Where possible, such features should be integrated into the design of schemes as one of the key onsite environmental considerations.</p> | <p>practicable to the original and where possible linking in to existing adjacent hedges. Native plants of a local provenance should be used for any such planting</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Waterways and Wetlands</p> <p>BNH 31 Protect waterbodies and watercourses from inappropriate development, to ensure they are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection values and to conserve and enhance where possible, the wildlife habitats of the County's rivers and riparian zones, lakes, canals and streams which occur outside of designated areas to provide a network of habitats and biodiversity corridors throughout the county.</p> <p>BNH 32 Promote and develop the Barrow Blueway initiative and work with State Agencies, landowners, local communities and other relevant groups to protect and manage inland waters, river corridors and their floodplains from degradation and damage, and to recognise and promote them as natural assets of the urban and rural environment</p> <p>BNH 33 Promote and facilitate the development of the Grand Canal for cycling, walking and nature study in conjunction with the relevant bodies including Waterways Ireland to enhance its amenity. Investigate the possibility of developing long distance walking routes/Greenway, within the lifetime of the Plan, along the disused Mountmellick Grand Canal Line.</p> <p>BNH 34 Protect riparian corridors by reserving land along their banks for ecological corridors and maintain them free from inappropriate development. Where developments are proposed adjacent to waterways in previously undeveloped areas, the Planning Authority will require a general setback distance of a minimum of 10 metres from the waterways edge, subject to site-specific characteristics and the nature and design of the development. In previously developed areas, for example, within town centres, this general setback distance is likely to be reduced and should be part of any pre-planning consultations with the Council.</p> <p>BNH 35 Require that development along rivers set aside lands for pedestrian routes and cycleways that could link to the broader area and established settlements in the area.</p> <p>BNH 36 Provide for public access to waterways where feasible and appropriate, in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Waterways Ireland and other relevant stakeholders, whilst maintaining them free from inappropriate development, subject to Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, as appropriate.</p> <p>BNH 37 Protect the Nore Pearl Mussel through the measures set out in the Freshwater Pearl Mussel Nore Sub-Basin Management Plan (2009).</p> <p>BNH 38 Protect the migration of fish in the River Barrow Nore SAC from high risk barriers such as weirs and bridge sills.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Peatlands</p> <p>BNH 40 The County Development will continue to support the objectives of the Strategic Framework for the Future use of Peatlands which identifies new potential future land uses and also seek to progress opportunities under Just Transition Fund.</p> <p>BNH 41 Protect the county's designated peatland areas and landscapes and to conserve and manage their ecological, archaeological, cultural, and educational heritage by promoting high environmental standards in conjunction with Bord na Mona, NPWS, IPPC, NGO's and local communities.</p> <p>BNH 42 Work with relevant agencies such as Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, Bord na Mona, NPWS, Coillte and adjacent Local Authorities to prepare an integrated afteruse framework and management plans for the peatlands and related infrastructure,</p> <p>BNH 43 Support the preparation of a Sustainable Holistic Management Plan for the future use of the Industrial Peatlands in the County, which recognises the role of peatlands in carbon sequestration.</p> <p>BNH 44 Support the designation of a National Park for the peatlands area in the Midlands in conjunction with adjoining Local Authorities.</p> <p>BNH 45 Undertake a feasibility study to identify peatways, where appropriate and examine the tourist potential of same such as a peatway link from Portarlington to the Grand Canal and River Barrow Greenway.</p> <p>BNH 46 Support relevant agencies to provide for the future sustainable and environmentally sensitive use of large industrial peatlands at Cuil Na Mona.</p> <p>Light Pollution Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 49<br/>Ensure that external lighting and lighting schemes are designed so that light spillage is minimised, thereby limiting light pollution into the surrounding environment and protecting the amenities of nearby properties and wildlife, including protected species</p> <p>ES 50<br/>Encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and limit light pollution in urban and rural areas</p> <p>ES 51<br/>Encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and limit light pollution in urban and rural areas</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Green Infrastructure</p> <p>BNH 19 Ensure that areas and networks of Green Infrastructure are identified, protected, enhanced, managed and created to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits to communities.</p> <p>BNH 20 Develop and implement a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Laois in partnership with key stakeholders and the public which reflects a long-term perspective, including the need to adapt to climate change. Ensure the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Laois protects existing Green Infrastructure resources and plans for future Green Infrastructure provision</p> <p>BNH 21 Require all Local Area Plans and Master Plans to protect, enhance, provide and manage Green Infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner. Set targets for the provision of Green Infrastructure elements such as trees and green roofs as part of the preparation of Local Area Plans.</p> <p>BNH 22 Promote a network of paths and cycle tracks to enhance accessibility to the Green Infrastructure network, while ensuring that the design and operation of the routes respect and where possible enhances the ecological potential of each site</p> <p>BNH 23 Encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries</p> |

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|       |  |  | <p>and laneways, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.</p> <p>BNH 24 To identify and map Green Infrastructure assets and sites of local biodiversity value over the lifetime of the Plan.</p> <p><b>Offaly County Development Plan</b></p> <p>Designated and Non-Designated Sites</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect, conserve, and seek to enhance the county's biodiversity and ecological connectivity.</p> <p>It is Council policy to conserve and protect habitats and species listed in the Annexes of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (as amended) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Wildlife Acts 1976 (as amended) and the Flora Protection Orders.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support and co-operate with statutory authorities and others in support of measures taken to manage proposed or designated sites in order to achieve their conservation objectives.</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect and maintain the conservation value of all existing and future Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Wildfowl Sanctuaries and Biogenetic Reserves in the county.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory avoidance or mitigation, on plant, animal or bird species protected by law.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and take account of any licensing requirements, when undertaking, approving or authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species protected by law.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 and the Offaly Heritage Plan Key Actions 2017-2021 and future editions in partnership with relevant stakeholders subject to available resources.</p> <p>It is Council policy to work with all state agencies to promote the development of all aspects of park management in the Slieve Bloom Mountains.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council that no plans, programmes or projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects ).</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council that all projects and plans arising from this Plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and subsequent Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or</li> <li>2. The plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or</li> <li>3. The plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.</li> </ol> <p>It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the impact of development within or adjacent to national designated sites, Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites and Nature Reserves likely to result in significant adverse effects on the designated site is assessed by requiring the submission of an Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by a suitably qualified professional, which should accompany planning applications.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council in accordance with Article 4(4) of the Birds Directive and Regulation 27(4) of the European Communities (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015 to strive to avoid pollution or deterioration of bird habitats outside Special Protection Areas.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to take account of the objective and management practices proposed in any management or related plans for European Sites (SACs and SPAs) in and adjacent to the county published by the Department including the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Management Plan 2017-2022 and any subsequent editions.</p> <p><b>Peatlands</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to protect the county's designated peatland areas and landscapes, including any historical walkways through bogs and to conserve their ecological, archaeological and cultural heritage and to develop educational heritage.</p> <p>It is Council policy to work with adjacent local authorities and relevant stakeholders in promoting a National Park designation for the peatlands in the midlands and a 'Regional Peatway' connecting natural and cultural attractions.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the provision of outdoor pursuits, walking and cycling routes through the county's peatlands and network of industrial railways linking the River Shannon Blueway, Royal Canal, Grand Canal and Barrow Blueway across the midlands as outlined in the 'Major Cycling Destination in the Midlands of Ireland –Feasibility Study 2016', which is a priority of the 'Outdoor Recreation Plan State Lands and Waters' (2017).</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the National Parks and Wildlife Service in carrying out an EU LIFE fund supported raised bog restoration project in restoring the following Special Areas of Conservation sites in the county to favourable conservation status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clara Bog;</li> </ul> |

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|       |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ferbane Bog;</li> <li>• Mongan Bog;</li> <li>• Moyclare Bog;</li> <li>• Raheenmore Bog; and</li> <li>• Sharavogue Bog.</li> </ul> <p>It is Council policy to support collaboration between Offaly County Council, Regional Transition Team and relevant stakeholders of a partnership approach to integrated peatland management for a just transition that incorporates the management, rehabilitation and restoration / re-wetting of significant tracts of peatlands in conjunction with appropriate developed after uses.</p> <p><b>Peatlands</b></p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to require the preparation and submission of a Hydrological Report/Assessment for significant developments within and in close proximity to protected raised bogs and to take account of same in the assessment of impacts on the integrity of peatland ecosystems.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to work with relevant stakeholders on suitable peatland sites in order to demonstrate best practice in sustainable peatland conservation, management and restoration techniques to promote their heritage and educational value subject to ecological impact assessment and appropriate assessment screening.</p> <p><b>Waterways, Lakes and Wetlands</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to protect the landscape associated with the River Shannon, including the Callows and views of special interest, and also to encourage the development of Shannonbridge, Banagher and Shannon Harbour as focal points. It will also be Council policy to investigate the possibility of providing a Linear Park based on the River Shannon from Banagher to Meelick, which takes account of the sensitive ecological nature of the Callows area.</p> <p>It is Council policy to preserve riparian buffer strips free from development by reserving a minimum of 10 metres either side of all watercourses (measured from top of bank) with the full extent of the protection determined on a case by case basis by the Council, based on site specific characteristics and sensitivities.</p> <p>It is Council policy to promote clear span bridging structures as the preferred option for culverts Any development proposal requiring culverting should also document stream habitat lost and provide compensatory habitat where possible. Realignment of water courses should incorporate stream enhancement measures, as outlined in Office of Public Works Environmental Guidance. The Council will consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland in relation to riparian and instream works as appropriate.</p> <p>It is Council policy to promote the removal of historic culverts and infilling of watercourses.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consider the Waterways Corridor Study 2002 and protect the recreational, educational and amenity potential of navigational and non-navigational waterways within the county, such as the Grand Canal Corridor, towpaths and adjacent wetland landscapes, taking into account more recent heritage and environmental legislation (including the SEA Directive) and environmental policy commitments.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to maintain a riparian zone for larger and smaller river channels based on the Inland Fisheries Ireland updated guideline document, 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment, a Guide to the Protection of Watercourses through the use of Buffer Zones, Sustainable Drainage Systems, Instream Rehabilitation, Climate / Flood Risk and Recreational Planning'.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to (a) investigate the feasibility of and cooperate with relevant agencies in providing a Linear Park based on the River Shannon from Banagher to Meelick, which takes account of the sensitive ecological nature of the Callows area and (b) to support the development of an overall vision/strategy for the Shannon Callows in co-operation with all stakeholders to ensure that the area is appropriately managed at a landscape scale.</p> <p><b>Trees, Forestry and Hedgerows</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to support the protection and management of existing networks of woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character, and to strengthen local networks.</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage the planting of native species in all new residential developments (individual and multiple units) and as part of landscaping for commercial and industrial developments.</p> <p>It is Council policy to require, where practical, the management of mature trees, such as tree surgery instead of felling particularly where the trees contribute to amenity.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to preserve individual trees and groups of trees that are included in Table 4.13 and 4.14.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to consider the making of Tree Preservation Orders to protect trees and woodlands of high value.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to encourage the preservation and enhancement of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees, not listed in Table 4.13 and 4.14;</p> <p>(a) in particular, on the grounds of Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes and on approaches to settlements in the county; and</p> <p>(b) as part of the development management process, require the planting of native, deciduous, pollinator friendly trees in all new developments where possible.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to encourage pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to encourage the retention, wherever possible, of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatment in the county. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, provision of the same type of boundary will be required of similar length and set back within the site in advance of the commencement of construction works on the site (unless otherwise agreed by the Planning</p> |



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|                                    |   |   | <p>Authority).</p> <p>Green Infrastructure Strategy</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to require all new developments to identify, protect and enhance ecological features by making provision for local biodiversity (for example, through provision of swift boxes or towers, bat roost sites, green roofs, etc.) and provide ecological links to the wider Green Infrastructure network as an essential part of the design process.</p> <p>All Ireland Pollinator Plan</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the aims and objectives of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 and any subsequent editions by delivering appropriate management actions as set out in their guidance documents.</p> <p>Invasive Species</p> <p>It is Council policy to continue to deliver and support measures for the prevention, control and/or eradication of invasive species within the county, and to seek details of how these species will be managed and controlled where their presence is identified.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to require, as part of the planning application process, the appropriate eradication/control of invasive species when identified on site or in the vicinity of a site, in accordance with Regulation 49 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 to 2015.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to continue to maintain mapping identifying the location of invasive species in the county in conjunction with the National Biodiversity Data Centre.</p> <p>Light Pollution</p> <p>It is Council policy to require that the design of lighting schemes minimises the incidence of light pollution into the surrounding environment. New schemes shall ensure that there is no unacceptable adverse impact on residential or visual amenity and biodiversity in the surrounding area.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to seek to minimise the harmful effects of light pollution in the future provision of outdoor lighting, including investigating measures to improve the approach to street lighting and ensuring that new developments are lit appropriately and that environmentally sensitive areas are protected.</p> <p>Increases in visitor numbers</p> <p>It is Council policy to seek to manage any increases in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance and impacts on existing infrastructure. Visitor / habitat management plans will be required for proposed tourism projects as relevant and appropriate</p>   |
| <b>Population and human health</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential adverse effects arising from flood events.</li> <li>• Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors.</li> </ul> | <p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>10.3.4 Energy Efficiency</p> <p>a) Low Carbon District Heating</p> <p>District Heating is a method of delivering thermal energy in the form of hot water through a network of highly insulated pipelines. District heating systems have the ability to distribute heat from many different sources, including heat sources that are typically seen as a by-product and usually go to waste, like the waste heat from electricity production, industry and data centres. This JLAP recognises the potential of District Heating Systems, where technically feasible and cost effective, to provide heating and hot water to houses and businesses at appropriate locations, where feasible, to assist in meeting renewable heat targets and reduce Irelands GHG emissions, reducing our dependency on fossil fuels and our carbon emissions as well as providing better air quality. It is envisaged that such local renewable energy systems will become a feature of towns such as Portarlington with support under the national Climate Action Plan. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland provides supports/funding to communities</p> | <p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>COMAH Policy Objectives</p> <p><b>Laois County Development Plan</b></p> <p>ES 55 Ensure that any COMAH sites in County Laois are managed in accordance with the provisions of the Seveso III Directive</p> <p>ES 56 Have regard to the following in assessing applications for new developments (including extensions);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Major Accidents Directive Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU);</li> <li>• The potential effects on public health and safety;</li> <li>• The need to ensure adequate distances between such developments and residential areas, areas of public use and any areas of sensitivity</li> </ul> <p>ES 57 Any proposals for developments within the vicinity of major accident hazard sites shall have cognisance of the required minimum separation distances as required by the Major Accidents Directive. In this regard all future proposals of this nature shall be forwarded to the Health and Safety Authority</p> <p><b>Offaly County Development Plan</b></p> <p>Human Health</p> <p>It is Council policy to assess, as relevant, proposals for development in terms of, inter alia, potential impact on existing adjacent developments, existing land uses and/or the surrounding landscape. Where proposed developments would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the amenities of the area through pollution by noise, fumes, odours, dust, grit or vibration, or cause pollution of air, water and/or soil, mitigation measures shall be introduced in order to eliminate adverse environmental impacts or reduce them to an acceptable operating level. Application of this policy will take into account instances whereby activities are licensed by other bodies through other processes (such as Integrated Pollution Control Licensing or Industrial Emissions Licensing).</p> <p>Major Accidents Directive – Seveso III</p> <p>It is Council policy, for the purposes of preventing / reducing the risk or limiting the consequences of a major accident involving dangerous substances, to have regard to the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive, and any regulations under any enactment giving effect to that Directive, and the recommendations of the Health and Safety Authority, in the control of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The siting of new establishments;</li> <li>• The modification of existing establishments; and</li> <li>• Development within the consultation distance of such establishments.</li> </ul> <p>Radon</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure the implementation of the specific guidance on radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the existing Building Regulations (including any updated/superseding regulations that may be published within the lifetime of this Plan).</p> <p>Wind Farms</p> <p>It is Council policy that in assessing planning applications for wind farms, the Council shall:</p> |

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|             |  | <p>in mapping their energy demands and potential energy resources in an 'Energy Master Plan'.<br/>Policy 13.11<br/>Require that all construction projects are carried out in accordance with EPA's Best practice guidelines for the preparation of resource &amp; waste management plans for construction &amp; demolition projects (2021), and any subsequent amendments.</p> | <p>(a) have regard to the provisions of the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006, the Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change 2017 and the Draft revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 which are expected to be finalised in the near future;<br/>(b) have regard to 'Areas Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Developments' in the Wind Energy Strategy Designations Map from the County Wind Energy Strategy;<br/>(c) the impact of the proposed wind farm development on proposed Wilderness Corridors as detailed in Objective BLO-28 of Chapter 4;<br/>(d) have regard to Development Management Standard 109 on wind farms contained in Chapter 13 of this Plan; and<br/>(e) have regard to existing and future international, European, national and regional policy, directives and legislation.</p>  |
| <b>Soil</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands.</li> <li>Potential for riverbank erosion.</li> </ul> | <p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Water and Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna.</p>   | <p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Water.</p> <p><b>Laois County Development Plan</b><br/>ES 32 Control intensive agriculture development e.g. intensive pig unit productions in order to minimise their impact on soil and ground water quality. Developments involving intensive pig units shall be required to show compliance with the following requirements:<br/>a) The developer shall demonstrate that all lands available are suitable for landspreading of manures and have satisfactory Nutrient Management Plans for such lands<br/>b) Satisfactory arrangements for storage, management and spreading of slurries are provided.</p> <p><b>Soil Quality Policy Objectives</b><br/>ES 52 Ensure good soil quality throughout the county by requiring developments of a certain nature (as specified in the relevant environmental legislation) to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on soil quality<br/>ES 53 Recognise the significant impacts of land use, land use change and sludge generation and treatment in relation to carbon loss/stocks and recognise the function of soil assessment and management, carbon sinks, carbon sequestration and restoration of degraded lands in plan led settlement and development strategies</p> <p><b>Policy Objectives for Geology</b><br/>GEO 1 Work with stakeholders to protect, preserve, enhance, maintain, manage, conserve, recognise and, where appropriate, restore the character conservation value and integrity of these sites for their amenity, scientific, heritage and historic values (including County Geological Sites listed in Table 28, proposed NHA's, areas near site and areas of geomorphological interest<br/>GEO 2 Protect geological NHAs as they become designated and notified to the Local Authority, during the lifetime of the Plan;<br/>GEO 3 Promote and encourage, where practicable and when not in conflict with ownership rights, access to geological and geomorphological features<br/>GEO 4 Encourage and facilitate the development of geo-tourism by conserving and managing geological resources, and by the development of a Rock Trail (named), Geoparks or other similar geo-tourism initiatives</p> <p><b>Policy Objectives for Eskers</b><br/>GEO 5 Protect, preserve and conserve the landscape and natural heritage and geo-diversity values of esker systems from inappropriate development. Ensure that any plan or project affecting eskers are adequately assessed with regard to their potential impact on the environment<br/>GEO 6 Assess applications for quarrying activity and gravel extraction and other development in proximity to eskers, with respect to their landscape importance or amenity value and the need to conserve them free from inappropriate development and to conserve their environmental character values and the extent to which proposals would damage these qualities.</p> <p><b>Offaly County Development Plan</b><br/><b>Soil Protection, Contamination and Remediation</b><br/>Offaly County Council require that all undeveloped, contaminated sites be remediated to internationally accepted standards prior to redevelopment (i.e. brownfield development). Treatment/management of any contaminated material shall comply as appropriate with the Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended) (waste licence, waste facility permit), and the Environmental Protection Act 1992 (as amended) (Industrial Emissions licensing, in particular the First Schedule, Class 11 Waste). These measures will ensure that contaminated material will be managed in a manner that removes any risk to human health and ensures that the end use will be compatible with any risk.</p> <p><b>Geology, Eskers and Quarries</b><br/>It is Council policy to protect from inappropriate development and maintain the character, integrity and conservation value of features or areas of geological interest as contained in the scheduled list of geological heritage sites identified in Table 4.11 Offaly Geological Sites.<br/>It is Council policy to encourage, where practical and when not in conflict with ownership rights, access to geological features in the county.<br/>It is Council policy to protect and conserve the landscape, natural heritage and biodiversity value of esker systems in the county as identified in the Offaly Esker Study, 2006.<br/>It is Council policy to assess the impact of proposals for quarry development on nearby eskers, with reference to their status or relative importance, for example, amenity, landscape and scientific value in the context of the overall esker system.<br/>It is Council policy to recognise the natural heritage value of disused quarries as rich habitats and to encourage landowners to preserve quarries post extraction as habitats rather than levelling or infilling the quarry area where possible subject to health and safety considerations and the protection of the relevant conservation objectives, qualifying interests and integrity of Natura 2000 sites.<br/>It is an objective of the Council to protect county geological sites and mushroom stones identified in Table 4.11 Schedule of County Geological Sites</p> |

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|              |  |  | <p>identified by the Irish Geological Heritage Programme for Protection in County Offaly. It is an objective of the Council to increase pedestrian and cycling access to esker and geological sites in turn increasing appreciation of esker and geological heritage, where possible, subject to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. It is an objective of the Council to consider, in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Westmeath County Council, the Geological Survey of Ireland and others, the potential designation of the north Offaly esker landscape as a UNESCO Geopark, to promote the unique geological heritage of the area.</p>  |
| <b>Water</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology.</li> <li>Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events.</li> </ul> | <p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil and Material Assets.</p> <p>Objective 6.8 Develop and improve flood mitigation measures throughout the town and rural hinterland.</p> <p>Policy 10.6 Require that all development proposals in Portarlington integrate SUDS, and nature-based solutions to SUDS, as part of an overall sustainable urban drainage and urban greening approach, unless they are demonstrated to be operationally unfeasible to the satisfaction of the Council.</p> <p>Objective 12.8 Investigate the feasibility, including compliance with NPF National Strategic Outcome No. 4 "Sustainable Mobility", of providing future relief roads as indicated on the Objectives Map taking into account environmental sensitivities identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the policies and objectives of the Laois County Development Plan and the Offaly County Development Plan. The development of any relief road proposal shall be subject to the requirements of the EIA, Habitats, Water Framework and Flood Directives where relevant and appropriate.</p> <p>Policy 13.1 Require that new developments connect to the public water and wastewater networks in Portarlington where public mains are available, and subject to connection agreements with Uisce Éireann and compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.</p> <p>Policy 13.2 Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Uisce Éireann to develop and implement Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments.</p> <p>Policy 13.3 Preserve free from development the wayleaves of all public sewers and all public water mains.</p> <p>Policy 13.4 Minimise flood risk arising from pluvial (surface water) flooding in Portarlington by promoting the use of natural flood risk management measures including the use of Sustainable Urban</p> | <p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Soil and Material Assets.</p> <p><b>Laois County Development Plan</b></p> <p>ABT 6 Promote and investigate the feasibility of, subject to compliance with the habitats and Birds Directives, sustainable developing and improving of facilities and infrastructure supporting water based tourism activities, (including shore side interpretive centres and jetties). Development proposals outside settlement centres will be required to demonstrate a need to locate in the area and will be required to ensure that the ecological integrity and water quality of the river or lake, including lakeshore and riparian habitats, is not adversely affected by the development</p> <p>WS 3 Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Irish Water to develop and roll-out Drinking Water Safety Plans across all water schemes to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments and to ensure that good water quality is sustained in all public water supplies.</p> <p>WS 21 Continue to draw up and implement annual programmes for the monitoring of water quality in Group Water Schemes in accordance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended and as approved by the EPA.</p> <p>Water Quality Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 17 Implement the provisions of water pollution abatement measures in accordance with National and EU Directives and other legislative requirements in conjunction with other agencies as appropriate</p> <p>ES 18 Maintain and improve the water quality in rivers and other water courses in the county, including ground waters. The Council will have cognizance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 and 36 which provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>ES 19 Minimise the impact on groundwater of discharges from domestic wastewater treatment systems and other potentially polluting sources. The Council will comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses' (2009) and the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Code for Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels'</p> <p>ES 20 Assist and support with the Blue Dots Catchment Programme which been established under the current River Basin Management Plan specifically for the protection and restoration of high ecological status water bodies</p> <p>ES 21 Ensure the protection of all High Status Water Bodies in the county by complying with the requirements of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, (as amended), the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009, the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010; which standards and objectives are included in the River Basin Management Plans, and other relevant Regulations.</p> <p>WS 22 Ensure where private wastewater treatment systems are permitted by virtue of their remoteness from Public Wastewater Schemes to serve commercial and business developments, e.g Motorway Service Stations, Tourism and the Hospitality Sector etc, that their performance is monitored and audited so that they are operated in compliance with their wastewater discharge license, in order to protect water quality.</p> <p>Groundwater Protection Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 23 Ensure, through the implementation of the relevant River Basin Management Plan and their associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the county</p> <p>ES 24 Protect and develop, in a sustainable manner, the existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the County and control development in a manner consistent with the proper management of these resources, in accordance with the County Water Source Protection Zones</p> <p>ES 25 Assist and co-operate with the EPA, LAWPRO and IW in the continued implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive</p> <p>ES 26 Minimise the impact on groundwater of discharges from septic tanks and other potentially polluting sources through compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses' (2009).</p> <p>ES 27 Ensure the protection of groundwater dependant Natura 2000 sites which rely on the continued supply of groundwater resources to secure the key environmental conditions that support the integrity of the site and through the protection of groundwater standards as defined by the National River Basin Management Plan 2018 – 2021 (and any subsequent Plan). Where no detailed Plan for protection of a specific source is available wastewater discharge will not be permitted within a radius of 200 metres of that source</p> <p>ES 28 Ensure that Source Protection Areas are identified for any public and group scheme water supplies or multiple unit housing developments with private water supplies;</p> <p>ES 29 Continue efforts to improve water quality under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, (as amended) and by implementing the measures outlined under the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) and complying with the requirements of the Surface Water Legislation Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009, the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010; which standards and objectives are included in the River Basin Management Plans, and other relevant Regulations</p> <p>ES 30 Ensure that all industrial development is appropriately located, to seek effluent reduction and 'clean production' where feasible, and require that waste water treatment facilities are adequate, and that effluents are treated and discharged in a satisfactory manner</p> <p>ES 31 New developments which include on-site wastewater treatment in an Extreme Vulnerability Inner Source Protection Area shall be restricted to the</p> |

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|       |  | <p>Drainage Systems (SuDS) and nature-based solutions.</p> <p>Policy 13.5 Require the submission of a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), by a suitably qualified and indemnified professional, in areas at risk of flooding in Portarlington. The assessment shall be prepared in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009) and Circular PL2/2014 (and any future revisions or updates to these Guidelines).</p> <p>Objective 13.1 Support Uisce Éireann in the provision of a sufficient quantity and quality of water to serve the needs of the existing and future population of Portarlington over the period of the Plan and in accordance with the Core Strategies of Laois and Offaly County Councils, and to promote the sustainable management of the water supply for the town.</p> <p>Objective 13.2 Support the investment and provision of public water supply infrastructure by Uisce Éireann, including any maintenance works and planned upgrades to water treatment plants and the associated public mains water network serving the town, including the safeguarding of existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Objective 13.3 Support wastewater treatment infrastructure investment and provision by Uisce Éireann in Portarlington, including any maintenance works and planned upgrades of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the associated wastewater network serving the town, including the safeguarding of existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Objective 13.4 Manage flood risk in Portarlington in conjunction with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), Circular PL02/2014, and any future revisions or updates to these Guidelines.</p> <p>Objective 13.7 (please let me know if numbering is different):<br/>Ensure that developments, individually as a result of the proposed development, or cumulatively, in combination with other developments, will not adversely impact</p> | <p>following categories:</p> <p>a) A dwelling for a full-time farmer;</p> <p>b) An existing inhabited dwelling in need of replacement;</p> <p>c) A second family dwelling on a farm where this is required for management of the farm</p> <p>Permission may be granted in the above instances subject to the following stipulations:</p> <p>a) That an alternative site outside the Extreme vulnerability Inner Protection Area is not available</p> <p>b) The existing water quality of the source is not subject to any significant nitrate and /or microbiological contamination</p> <p>c) The existing water quality of the groundwater source is in compliance with the environmental objectives set out in relevant River Basin District Management Plan.</p> <p>ES 32 Control intensive agriculture development e.g. intensive pig unit productions in order to minimise their impact on soil and ground water quality. Developments involving intensive pig units shall be required to show compliance with the following requirements:</p> <p>a) The developer shall demonstrate that all lands available are suitable for landspreading of manures and have satisfactory Nutrient Management Plans for such lands</p> <p>b) Satisfactory arrangements for storage, management and spreading of slurries are provided.</p> <p>ES 33 Encourage the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets, European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2017, as amended and comply with the relevant River Basin Management Plan.</p> <p>ES 34 Consult as necessary with other competent authorities with responsibility for environmental management</p> <p>ES 35 To work in co-operation with relevant organisations and major stakeholders, to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the protection and improvement of the county's water resources</p> <p>ES 36 Ensure that developments that may adversely affect water quality will not proceed unless mitigation measures are employed, such as settlements ponds, interceptors etc</p> <p>ES 37 Promote public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect both surface water and groundwater bodies</p> <p>Flood Risk Management Policy Objectives</p> <p>FRM 1 Ensure that flood risk management is incorporated into the preparation of all local area plans through the preparation in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2009)</p> <p>FRM 2 Ensure that all development proposals comply with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DEHLG 2009) and to ensure that the Justification Test for Development Management is applied to required development proposals and in accordance with methodology set out in the guidelines and new development does not increase flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water runoff.</p> <p>FRM 3 Support the implementation of recommendations in the CFRAM Programme to ensure that flood risk management policies and infrastructure are progressively implemented.</p> <p>FRM 4 Support the implementation of recommendations in the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMP's), including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.</p> <p>FRM 5 Consult with the OPW in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible, and to retain a strip on either side of such channels where required, to facilitate maintenance access thereto.</p> <p>FRM 6 Assist the OPW in developing catchment-based Flood Risk Management Plans for rivers in County Laois and have regard to their provisions/recommendations.</p> <p>FRM 7 Protect and enhance the County's floodplains and wetlands as 'green infrastructure' which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reducing the need to provide flood defenses in the future, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.</p> <p>FRM 8 Protect the integrity of any formal (OPW or Laois County Council) flood risk management infrastructure, thereby ensuring that any new development does not negatively impact any existing defense infrastructure or compromise any proposed new infrastructure.</p> <p>FRM 9 Ensure that where flood risk management works take place that the natural and cultural heritage, rivers, streams and watercourses are protected and enhanced.</p> <p>FRM 10 Ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the OPW Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan Flood Risk Management applicable at the time.</p> <p>FRM 11 Consult, where necessary, with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies in the provision of flood alleviation measures in the County.</p> <p>FRM 12 Prioritise plans for flood defence works in the towns as indicated in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in order to mitigate against potential flood risk;</p> <p>FRM 13 Ensure new development does not increase flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water runoff;</p> <p>FRM 14 Protect water sinks because of their flood management function, as well as their biodiversity and amenity value and encourage the restoration or creation of water sinks as flood defence mechanisms, where appropriate</p> <p>Surface Water and Drainage Policy Objectives</p> <p>SWD 1 Support in conjunction with Irish Water the improvement of storm water infrastructure to improve sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in urban environments.</p> |



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|       |  | <p>on the status of waterbodies in accordance with the European Water Framework Directive and Ireland's "Water Action Plan 2024: River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027" (DHLGH, 2024).</p> <p>Policy 15.4 Protect, manage, and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape, and environment of Portarlington in recognition of its importance as a natural resource that can contribute towards sustainable urban drainage, flood management, and climate action.</p> <p>Policy 10.14 Ensure that surface water management in new developments, and the design of nature-based solutions, in line with Policy 13.4, reflect the following guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature Based Management of Urban Rainwater and Urban Water Discharges, A National Strategy (May 2024)</li> <li>• "Implementation of Urban Nature Based Solutions -Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents" LAWPRO (November 2024)</li> </ul> <p>Policy 13.10 Support the mitigation measures outlined in Part 3 of the Justification Tests that:</p> <p>a) Within Flood Zones A and B, highly vulnerable development is limited to extensions, rebuilds and changes of use until the Flood Relief Scheme is completed; and</p> <p>b) Within Flood Zones A and B, bedrooms must be located in the upstairs of two story buildings when extending existing properties;</p> <p>Policy 13.12 Ensure that surface water management in new developments, and the design of nature-based solutions, in line with Policy 13.4, reflect the following guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature Based Management of Urban Rainwater and Urban Water Discharges, A National Strategy (May 2024)</li> <li>• "Implementation of Urban Nature Based Solutions -Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents" LAWPRO (November 2024)</li> </ul> <p>Policy 13.13 Development within flood risks areas shall be limited to that appropriate to the level of flood risk, as identified in Map 3 (Land use Zoning, SAC and Flood Zoning) in accordance with the provisions of the</p> | <p>SWD 2 Implement policies contained in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDSDS) in relation to SUDS and climate change.</p> <p>SWD 3 Ensure new development is adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure which meets the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, associated River Basin Management Plans and CFRAM Management Plans.</p> <p>SWD 4 Require that planning applications are accompanied by a comprehensive SUDS assessment that addresses run-off quantity, run-off quality and its impact on the existing habitat and water quality.</p> <p>SWD 5 Ensure that in public and private developments in urban areas, both within developments and within the public realm, seek to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.</p> <p>SWD 6 Ensure appropriate maintenance of surface water drainage infrastructure to avoid flood risk.</p> <p>SWD 7 Ensure that all storm water generated in a new development is disposed of on-site or is attenuated and treated prior to discharge to an approved storm water system;</p> <p>SWD 8 Promote storm water retention facilities for new developments and to incorporate design solutions that provide for collection and recycling of surface water in accordance with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems as recommended in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2009) and Laois County Council's Roads and Drainage Standards, or as amended.</p> <p><b>Offaly County Development Plan</b></p> <p><b>Water Quality/Status</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that the Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plan and any subsequent Water Management Plans are fully considered throughout the planning process.</p> <p>It is Council policy to manage, protect and enhance surface water and ground water quality to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plan and the Local Authority Waters Programme in achieving and maintaining at least good environmental status for all water bodies in the county. Development proposals shall not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface waters, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated woodlands.</p> <p>It is Council policy that in assessing applications for developments, that consideration is had to the impact on the quality of surface waters having regard to targets and measures set out in the River Basin Management Plan, and any subsequent local or regional plans.</p> <p>It is Council policy that all proposed development which may have an impact on a high status water quality site will require site specific assessment to determine localised pressures and demonstrate suitable mitigation measures in order to protect these sites.</p> <p>It is Council policy to promote and comply with the environmental standards and objectives established for:</p> <p>(i) Bodies of surface water, by the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009, made to give effect to the measures needed to achieve the environmental objectives established for bodies of surface water by the European Water Framework Directive; and</p> <p>(ii) Groundwater, by the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010, made to give effect to the measures needed to achieve the environmental objectives established for groundwater by the European Water Framework and Groundwater Directives, for which standards and objectives are included in the River Basin Management Plan.</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect groundwater sources through the implementation of the Groundwater Protection Scheme and Source Protection Zones. Development proposals within these zones which have the potential to pose a risk to groundwater will be required to demonstrate that no reasonable alternative site is available and that groundwater quality will be protected to the satisfaction of the Council.</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets and comply with the River Basin Management Plan.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to ensure, through the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan, and any other associated legislation, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the county.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to protect through its regulatory controls and in conjunction with the Local Authority Waters Programme, water bodies with 'high ecological status'; to restore water bodies that have fallen below 'high ecological status'; to maintain water bodies at 'Good Status'; and to mitigate threats to water bodies identified as 'At Risk' i.e. 'Moderate and Poor Status'.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to protect both ground and surface water resources; to work with Irish Water to develop and implement Drinking Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchment; and to work with the National Federation of Group Water Schemes in respect of Source Protection Plans for Group Water Schemes to protect these sources.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to comply with the Blue Dot Catchments Programme.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that agricultural developments are designed and constructed in a manner that will ensure that groundwater watercourses and sources of potable water are protected from the threat of pollution in line with Water Quality Regulations and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>Sustainable urban drainage systems and Surface Water</p> <p>It is Council policy to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs) where appropriate, for new developments or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.</p> <p>Flood Risk Management</p> <p>It is Council policy to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive, the Flood Risk Regulations (S.I. No. 122 of 2010) and the 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and Department Circular Pl2/2014 or any</p> |

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|       |  | <p>Planning system and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), as amended. New development within this area is limited to water compatible uses in Flood Zone A and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B except where all criteria of the Plan Making and Development Management Justification Tests have been shown to have been satisfied and a detailed SSFRA has been provided.</p> <p>Section 16.12 Designations (Offaly)</p> <p>Constrained Land Uses (Offaly)</p> <p>Flood risk areas are represented by a 'Constrained Land Use' designation (shown in Map 3: Land Use Zoning, SAC and Flood Zoning). This designation generally limits new development, but will facilitate existing development uses within these areas that may require small scale development such as small extensions. Development proposals within these areas shall be accompanied by a site specific flood risk assessment, carried out in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines and Circular PL 2/2014 (or as updated), which shall assess the risks of flooding associated with the proposed development.</p> <p>Proposals shall only be considered favourably where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities, or increase the risk of flooding to other locations and be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The nature and design of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures required for development in such areas will also be required to be demonstrated, to ensure that flood hazard and risk will not be increased. Measures proposed shall follow best practice in the management of health and safety for users and residents of the development.</p> <p>Table 23: Land Use Zoning Objectives – Offaly (c)</p> <p>Land Use Zoning Objective – Constrained Land Uses</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to: Facilitate the appropriate management</p> | <p>updated / superseding version.</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 (or any superseding document) and the guidance contained in Development Management Standard DMS-106. Where a development/land use is proposed that is inappropriate within the Flood Zone, then the development proposal will need to be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test and site-specific Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with the criteria set out under with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 and Circular PL2/2014 (as updated/superseded). In Flood Zone C, (See DMS-106 where the probability of flooding is low (less than 0.1%, Flood Zone C), site-specific Flood Risk Assessment may be required and the developer should satisfy themselves that the probability of flooding is appropriate to the development being proposed. The County Plan SFRA datasets (including Benefitting Lands mapping), emerging CFRAMS mapping (including National Indicative Fluvial mapping), and the most up to date CFRAM Programme climate scenario mapping should be consulted by prospective planning applicants and the planning authority in determining planning applications.</p> <p>It is Council policy to require a Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) for all planning applications in areas at risk of flooding (fluvial, pluvial or groundwater), even for developments deemed appropriate in principle to the particular Flood Zone. The detail of these site-specific FRAs will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. A detailed site-specific FRA should quantify the risks, the effects of selected mitigation and the management of any residual risks. The assessments shall consider and provide information on the implications of climate change with regard to flood risk in relevant locations. The 2009 OPW Draft Guidance on Assessment of Potential Future Scenarios for Flood Risk Management (or any superseding document) and available information from the CFRAM Studies shall be consulted with to this effect.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that applications to existing developments in flood vulnerable zones provide details of structural and non-structural risk management measures to include, but not be limited to specifications of the following - floor levels, internal layout, flood resilient construction, flood resistant construction, emergency response planning, access and egress during flood events.</p> <p>It is Council policy to work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the county, from risk of flooding. Any potential future variations to the Plan shall consider, as appropriate any new and/or emerging data, including, when available, any relevant information contained in the CFRAMS Flood Risk Management Plans and as recommended in the SFRA for the Plan.</p> <p>It is Council policy to have regard to the findings and recommendations of the current Strategic Flood Risk Assessment prepared as part of the County Development Plan.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consult with the Office of Public Works (OPW) in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible, and the Council will retain a strip of 10 metres on either side of such channel where required, to facilitate access thereto.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consult, where necessary, with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies in the construction of flood alleviation measures in Offaly.</p> <p>It is Council policy to work with the OPW and other relevant Departments and agencies to implement the recommendations of the CFRAM programme to ensure that flood risk management policies and infrastructure are progressively implemented, and to also work with catchment-based Flood Planning Groups, (including where catchments go beyond the Council's administrative boundary) in the development and implementation of catchment-based strategies for the management of flood risk – including those relating to storage and conveyance.</p> <p>It is Council policy that where resources are available and subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives, the Council will contribute towards the improvement and / or restoration of the natural flood risk management functions of flood plains.</p> <p>It is Council policy to take account of and incorporate into local planning policy and decision making, including possible future variations to this plan, the recommendations of the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to ensure that flood risk management is incorporated into the preparation of Local Area Plans in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009).</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to co-operate with the Office of Public Works (OPW) in the delivery of the Birr, Portarlington and Rahan Flood Relief Schemes and other schemes that may be brought forward in the lifetime of this Plan.</p> <p>12.6.1 Constrained Land Uses</p> <p>Flood risk areas in settlement plans are represented by a 'Constrained Land Use' designation. This designation generally limits new development, but will facilitate existing development uses within these areas that may require small scale development such as small extensions. Development proposals within these areas shall be accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, carried out in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines and Circular PL 2/2014 (or as updated), which shall assess the risks of flooding associated with the proposed development.</p> <p>Proposals shall only be considered favourably where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities, or increase the risk of flooding to other locations and be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The nature and design of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures required for development in such areas will also be required to be demonstrated, to ensure that flood hazard and risk will not be increased. Measures proposed shall follow best practice in the management of health and safety for users and residents of the development.</p> <p>LUZO-14 Facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of flood risk areas designated as 'Constrained Land Use' on Settlement Plan zoning maps.</p> |

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|                                 |   | and sustainable use of flood risk areas designated as 'Constrained Land Use' in the zoning map in accordance with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), as amended, in consultation with the OPW. New development within this area is limited to water-compatible uses in Flood Zone A and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B except where all criteria of the Plan Making and Development Management Justification Tests have been shown to have been satisfied and a detailed SSFRA has been provided.  | 13.8.3 Flood Risk Assessment<br>The Council will have regard to the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Local Authorities (DEHLG and OPW 2009) when assessing planning applications. The key requirements for the management of development in areas at risk of flooding include:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All development proposals within or incorporating areas at moderate to high risk of flooding will require site specific and appropriately detailed Flood Risk Assessments.</li> <li>• All development proposals within or incorporating areas at moderate or high risk of flooding will require the application of the Development Management Justification Test in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009).</li> <li>• Any proposal that is considered acceptable in principle shall demonstrate the use of the sequential approach to inform the site layout and design of development. Proposals shall also demonstrate that mitigation and management measures can be put in place and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere.</li> </ul> DMD-106 Flood Risk Assessments   |
| <b>Air and Climatic Factors</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives.</li> <li>• Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality.</li> <li>• Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors.</li> <li>• Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management.</li> </ul> | <p>Also refer to various provisions relating to Transport and Movement</p> <p>Policy 10.1<br/>Support the implementation of International and National objectives on climate action including the Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP24) and any subsequent updates, the National Adaption Framework, Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (and any amending legislation) and both the Laois Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 and the Offaly Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 (and any updated Plans).</p> <p>Policy 10.2<br/>Support the transition of Portarlington to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency and conservation.</p> <p>Policy 10.3<br/>Secure climate resilience and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Portarlington by actively implementing policies which support integrated land use planning and sustainable travel, and maximise such opportunities through development location, form, layout, and design.</p> <p>Policy 10.4<br/>Support the effective and efficient use of land in Portarlington, prioritising compact growth through the development and regeneration of vacant and underutilised brownfield/infill land and buildings within the existing built-up footprint of the town.</p> <p>Policy 10.5<br/>Secure climate resilience and a reduction</p> | <p>Climate Action is provided for throughout the Plan, and is focused upon at Chapter 3 "Climate Action and Energy".</p> <p><b>Laois County Development Plan</b><br/>Air Quality Policy Objectives<br/>ES 38 Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents).<br/>ES 39 Encourage more sustainable modes of transport and a more balanced modal split to reduce carbon emissions<br/>ES 40 Encourage the use of appropriate mitigation measures, such as dust dampeners, chimney stack scrubbers, etc. to minimise the potential impacts of developments on air quality<br/>ES 41 Require developments of a certain nature to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on air quality<br/>ES 42 Ensure the implementation of the radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the Building Regulations<br/>Noise Pollution Policy Objectives<br/>ES 42 Require an assessment of impact of the developments on noise levels, having regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acts 1992 and 2003 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994 when assessing planning applications<br/>ES 43 Support the implementation of the Noise Directive 2002/49/EC and associated Environmental Noise Regulations 2006<br/>ES 44 Ensure that relevant planning applications comply with the provisions of any Noise Action Plan or noise maps relating to the area.<br/>ES 45 Restrict development proposals causing noise pollution in excess of best practice standards<br/>ES 46 Regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA.<br/>ES 47 Ensure new development does not cause an unacceptable increase in noise levels affecting noise sensitive properties. Proposals for new development with the potential to create excessive noise will be required to submit a construction and/or operation management plan to control such emissions.<br/>ES 48 Require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate</p> <p><b>Offaly County Development Plan</b><br/>Air Quality<br/>It is Council policy to manage air quality in accordance with relevant legislation and policy.<br/>It is Council policy to promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as set out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011, or any updated/superseding documents.<br/>It is Council policy to require activities likely to give rise to air emissions to implement measures to control such emissions and to undertake air quality monitoring. Application of this policy will take into account instances whereby activities are licensed by other bodies through other processes (such as Integrated Pollution Control Licensing or Industrial Emissions Licensing).<br/>It is an objective of the Council to reduce harmful emissions and achieve and maintain good air quality for the county.<br/>It is an objective of the Council to actively promote measures to reduce air pollution and combat climate change including promotion of energy efficient buildings, cleaner home heating, green infrastructure, active and public transport modes, electric vehicles and innovative design solutions.<br/>It is an objective of the Council to promote sustainable design and construction to help reduce emissions from the demolition and construction of buildings.<br/>It is an objective of the Council to work with relevant agencies to support local data collection in the development of air quality monitoring.<br/>Noise<br/>It is Council policy to promote the implementation of the Environmental Noise Directive and associated regulations through the Offaly County Council</p> |

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|       |  | <p>of greenhouse gas emissions in Portarlington through support for urban regeneration projects and interventions, including the implementation of the 'Portarlington Regeneration Strategy 2030'.</p> <p>Policy 10.6<br/>Require that all development proposals in Portarlington integrate SUDS, and nature-based solutions to SUDS, as part of an overall sustainable urban drainage and urban greening approach, unless they are demonstrated to be operationally unfeasible to the satisfaction of the Council.</p> <p>Policy 10.7<br/>Require the use of renewable energy technologies in residential, commercial and community developments.</p> <p>Policy 10.8<br/>Support and facilitate the installation of lower carbon and low carbon heating options including district heating systems as a decarbonising technology in new developments in Portarlington, subject to compliance with proper planning and environmental considerations.</p> <p>Policy 10.9<br/>Support construction of green routes/cycleways/pedestrian routes throughout the town.</p> <p>Policy 10.10<br/>Support the provision of electricity charging infrastructure for electrical vehicles throughout the town, both on street and in new developments, in accordance with car parking standards and best practice.</p> <p>Policy 10.11<br/>In conjunction with the appropriate prescribed bodies, to investigate the feasibility of providing Wetland areas as shown in Appendix 10 (Map 4 – Green Infrastructure) taking into account the environmental sensitivities of the site and Inland Fisheries Guidance document, Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment.</p> <p>Policy 10.12<br/>Support and facilitate the ambitions of the National Residential Retrofit Plan, in particular, the development of the electrification of heating</p> <p>Policy 10.13<br/>Support the potential of district heating, including district heating delivered from</p> | <p>Noise Action Plan 2018-2023 and any subsequent Plan.</p> <p>It is Council policy to promote the pro-active management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life. Planning permission will not normally be granted for new uses / development or extensions of existing uses that produce significant and unacceptable levels of noise and/or vibration at site boundaries or within adjacent noise sensitive areas, especially residential areas.</p> <p>It is Council policy that noise sensitive development proposals located within proximity to a noise source, such as an existing or proposed national road, should include noise attenuation measures.</p> <p>Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation</p> <p>It is Council policy to support and facilitate European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the following documents, taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Action Plan (2019 and any subsequent versions);</li> <li>• National Mitigation Plan 2017 (or subsequent editions);</li> <li>• National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions);</li> <li>• Relevant provisions of any Sectoral Adaptation Plans prepared to comply with the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, including those seeking to contribute towards the National Transition Objective, to pursue, and achieve, the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the end of the year 2050; and</li> <li>• Offaly Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.</li> </ul> <p>It is Council policy to support the implementation and provision of the decarbonisation projects listed in Table 3.2 of the County Development Plan.</p> <p>It is Council policy to raise general awareness of issues associated with climate action and climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support local, regional, national and international initiatives for climate adaptation and mitigation and to limit emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources which make use of all natural resources, including publicly owned lands, in an environmentally acceptable manner.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the National Dialogue on Climate Action in an effort to increase awareness of climate change, behavioural change and adaptation actions and in doing so provide an ongoing platform for planning climate resilience with a focus on personal responsibility at all levels.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the creation of a Sustainable Development Trust, through Green Offaly, a Public Participation Network Initiative, which facilitates, creates and assists in the delivery of Green Projects and Programmes by working in partnership with all sectors of the local community.</p> <p>It is Council policy to cooperate with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) in respect of adaptation and mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, and future climate change adaptation strategies.</p> <p>CAEP-15 It is Council policy to support the enhancement of carbon sinks such as peatlands, forestry, and permanent grasslands, with consideration of in conjunction with other climate mitigation actions such as the re-wetting and restoration of cut away peatlands, where appropriate.</p> <p>CAEO-01 It is an objective of the Council to implement the current Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for County Offaly.</p> <p>CAEO-02 It is an objective of the Council to consider a variation of the development plan within a reasonable period of time, or to include such other mechanism, as may be appropriate, to ensure that the development plan will be consistent with the approach to climate action recommended in the revised Development Plan Guidelines as adopted or any relevant guidelines.</p> <p>Compact Growth, Sustainable Mobility and Integrated Transport and Landuse Planning</p> <p>It is Council policy to proactively encourage decarbonisation of local journeys by focusing on compact growth and reduced sprawl by targeting infill and brownfield lands in the existing built-up footprint of settlements.</p> <p>It is Council policy to improve walking and cycling connectivity within settlements and in particular with schools, town centres and employment areas, and to work with the National Trails Office, Coillte, the Department of Planning, Housing and Local Government, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, and other relevant stakeholders, to improve on the existing level of infrastructure and facilities for walking and cycling in this regard.</p> <p>Green Infrastructure</p> <p>It is Council policy to maintain existing green infrastructure and encourage and facilitate, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the development of green infrastructure that recognises the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of open space amenities;</li> <li>• Sustainable management of water;</li> <li>• Protection and management of biodiversity;</li> <li>• Protection of cultural heritage; and</li> <li>• Protection of protected landscape sensitivities.</li> </ul> <p>Economic Development: Climate Action</p> <p>REDP-15 It is Council policy to support the agricultural sector to employ green technologies in the provision of its goods and services, while taking measures to accelerate the transition towards a sustainable, low carbon and circular economy.</p> <p>REDP-16 It is Council policy to encourage the development of environmentally sustainable practices with a low carbon footprint, particularly agriculture, to ensure that development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the open countryside and that groundwater, watercourses, wildlife habitats and areas of ecological importance are protected from the threat of pollution.</p> |



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|                        |  | <p>waste heat, where available, technically feasible and cost effective.</p> <p>Objective 10.1 Support, in conjunction with key stakeholders, the implementation of the Climate Action Plans for County Laois and County Offaly, and to facilitate their role as a driver in the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change adaptation in Portarlington, and the translation of national climate policy to local and community levels in the town.</p> <p>Objective 10.2 Leverage all available funding streams which will support and deliver urban regeneration outcomes in Portarlington which seek to secure climate resilience and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the town.</p>   | <p>REDP-17 It is Council policy to support the development of renewable energy in rural areas, where it is considered appropriate i.e. where it is demonstrated that such development would not result in significant environmental effects. Such development will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>REDP-18 It is Council policy to encourage state and private afforestation, both native broadleaf and coniferous species, in appropriate locations, in co-operation with Coillte and the Forest Service and in line with national policy and Forest Service Guidelines. In addition, it is policy to encourage the Forest Service to avoid a proliferation of new forest road entrances, particularly in Areas of High Amenity.</p> <p>Traffic and Transport Assessment</p> <p>A Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) must examine the traffic and transport impacts of a proposed development, incorporating any subsequent measures necessary to ensure roads and junctions and other transport infrastructure in the vicinity of the development are adequate to accommodate the proposed development without causing additional delays to existing and future road based traffic. A TTA is important in demonstrating how to encourage a shift towards sustainable travel modes by those using the retail development in question. The TTA must also address urban design impacts of the proposed public and private transport proposals. A TTA will be required for retail developments over a threshold of 1,000sq.m. gross floorspace; and, at the discretion of the Planning Authority, a TTA may be required for retail developments below this threshold.</p>  |
| <b>Material Assets</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts).</li> <li>Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts).</li> <li>Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts).</li> <li>Increases in waste levels.</li> <li>Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure.</li> <li>Interactions between agricultural waste and soil, water, biodiversity and</li> </ul> | <p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health, Cultural Heritage, Soil, Water, Air and Climatic Factors and various Land Use provisions.</p> <p>Policy 10.6 Require that all development proposals in Portarlington integrate SUDS, and nature-based solutions to SUDS, as part of an overall sustainable urban drainage and urban greening approach, unless they are demonstrated to be operationally unfeasible to the satisfaction of the Council.</p> <p>Policy 13.1 Require that new developments connect to the public water and wastewater networks in Portarlington where public mains are available, and subject to connection agreements with Uisce Éireann and compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.</p> <p>Policy 13.2 Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Uisce Éireann to develop and implement Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments.</p> <p>Policy 13.3 Preserve free from development the wayleaves of all public sewers and all public water mains.</p> <p>Policy 13.4 Minimise flood risk arising from pluvial (surface water) flooding in Portarlington by promoting the use of natural flood risk management measures including the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and nature-based solutions.</p> <p>Objective 13.1 Support Uisce Éireann in</p> | <p>Also refer to measures under other environmental components including Population and Human Health, Cultural Heritage, Soil, Water, Air and Climatic Factors and various Land Use provisions.</p> <p><b>Laois County Development Plan</b></p> <p>Public Water Supply Policy Objectives</p> <p>WS 1 Continue in conjunction with Irish Water to ensure that a Safe and Reliable Water Supply by managing the sustainability and quality of drinking water from source to tap to protect human health</p> <p>WS 2 Provide for Resilience in Public Water Schemes and support social and economic growth and meet customer demands particularly during drought conditions by working with IW to deliver on the following priority schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portlaoise PWS – Bring into production the 3 non-producing Boreholes in Coolbanagher and increase Storage Capacity to provide 24 hours emergency supply;</li> <li>Portarlington PWS – Bring into Production Borehole(s) and Treatment Plant in the Doolough Wellfield and increase Storage Capacity to provide 24 hours emergency supply and</li> <li>Swan PWS – Bring into Production the Borehole and Treatment Plant at Tollerton.</li> </ul> <p>WS 3 Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Irish Water to develop and roll-out Drinking Water Safety Plans across all water schemes to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments and to ensure that good water quality is sustained in all public water supplies.</p> <p>WS 4 Work with Irish Water to ensure that adequate water services will be available to service zoned development and to require developers to engage with IW in a timely fashion by way of submitting a pre-connection enquiry form to IW.</p> <p>WS 5 Laois County Council will not permit developments of greater than one dwelling which propose standalone developer provided waste water infrastructure in areas remote from Public Water Schemes</p> <p>WS 6 Work with IW to minimise wastage of water supply by requiring existing and new developments to incorporate water conservation measures</p> <p>WS 7 Promote and encourage the harvesting of rainwater to meet non-potable water needs</p> <p>WS 8 Implement Energy Efficiency solutions in Water Systems;</p> <p>WS 9 Encourage industrial and commercial developments with small private water supplies to connect to the public water schemes where technically and financially feasible.</p> <p>WS 10 Ensure Water Conservation through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll-out further Mains Replacement programmes;</li> <li>Continue with validation of District Metre Areas(DMA's)</li> <li>Carry out focused Find and Fix Programmes to achieve target volumetric reductions in accordance with IW's targets.</li> </ul> <p>WS11 Work in accordance with IW/LA MoU and Protocol on an agreed programme with LA planning to take in charge private housing estates Water and transfer assets to IW.</p> <p>WS 12 Work in accordance with IW/LA MoU and Protocol and with the NFGWS on an agreed programme with the Local Authority to take in charge Public Group Water Scheme and transfer assets to IW.</p> <p>WS 13 Secure the future sustainability of Laois County Council's INAB Accredited Laboratory and enhance the accreditation status of the Laboratory in order to develop the Laboratory into one of 4 Regional Local Authority Accredited Laboratories nationally.</p> <p>Public Wastewater Objectives</p> <p>WS14 Support and facilitate social and economic growth in line with National, Regional and Local spatial planning policy and the Core Strategy in</p> |

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|       | <p>human health – including as a result of emissions of ammonia from agricultural activities (e.g. manure handling, storage and spreading) and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter.</p> | <p>the provision of a sufficient quantity and quality of water to serve the needs of the existing and future population of Portarlington over the period of the Plan and in accordance with the Core Strategies of Laois and Offaly County Councils, and to promote the sustainable management of the water supply for the town.</p> <p>Policy 13.6<br/>Require the incorporation of sustainable waste management measures within developments, including the provision of adequately sized facilities for the storage, separation, and collection of waste and recyclable materials.</p> <p>Policy 13.7<br/>Require the use of renewable energy technologies in residential, commercial and community developments.</p> <p>Policy 13.8<br/>Facilitate, promote and encourage the expansion and improvement of telecommunications, broadband (including the rollout of 5g), electricity and gas networks infrastructure.</p> <p>Policy 13.9<br/>Support the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables in the town.</p> <p>Policy 13.11<br/>Require that all construction projects are carried out in accordance with EPA's Best practice guidelines for the preparation of resource &amp; waste management plans for construction &amp; demolition projects (2021), and any subsequent amendments.</p> <p>Objective 13.2 Support the investment and provision of public water supply infrastructure by Uisce Éireann, including any maintenance works and planned upgrades to water treatment plants and the associated public mains water network serving the town, including the safeguarding of existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Objective 13.3 Support wastewater treatment infrastructure investment and provision by Uisce Éireann in Portarlington, including any maintenance works and planned upgrades of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the associated wastewater network serving the town, including the safeguarding of existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Objective 13.5<br/>Promote and support sustainable forms of</p> | <p>Chapter 2 of this plan through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure 1: Facilitate Growth: Wastewater Growth Programme: - Upgrade to the Portlaoise WWTP – phase 1 as proposed in the Feasibility Study. Roll-out agreed priorities for IWs Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme 2020 to 2024 and subsequent Programmes.</li> <li>• Measure 2: Network and Treatment Programmes: Roll-out improvements to network in Portlaoise WW Network as identified in the Portlaoise Drainage Area Plan (DAP). Complete DPAs for Portarlington and Mountmellick Wastewater Networks and complete modeling for improvements to these networks.</li> <li>• Measure 3: Irish Water Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme Under IWs Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme 2020 to 2024 and subsequent programmes agree priorities for delivering upgrades/replacements of WWTPs with insufficient headroom or plants that are non-compliant and damaging to the receiving environment so as to enhance and provide for growth in small towns and villages throughout the county.</li> </ul> <p>WS 15 Work in conjunction with Irish Water and with the DHPLG during the lifetime of the plan for the provision, extension and upgrading of waste water collection and treatment systems in the County that have existing facilities to serve existing populations and facilitate sustainable development of those towns, in accordance with the requirements of the Settlement Strategy and associated Core Strategy. In particular</p> <p>A. Wastewater Discharge Authorisation Compliance (EPA Licensed Plants)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Complete upgrade to Portlaoise – phase 1 as proposed in the Feasibility Study;</li> <li>ii. Upgrades to Ballinakill;</li> <li>iii. Ballyroan – Phase 3, 4 and 5;</li> <li>iv. Castletown – Sludge and Storm Tank Programmes;</li> <li>v. Mountmellick – Ortho P and Ammonia Compliance</li> </ol> <p>B. Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive Compliance: Complete upgrades to COA WWTPs (plants with &lt;500pe design) under the National Certificate of Authorisation Programme (NCAP) on a priority basis as agreed with the Local Authority.</p> <p>WS 16 Promote use of wetland systems for treatment of waste-water in accordance with Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines "Integrated Constructed Wetlands –Guidance Document for Farmyard Soiled Water and Domestic Wastewater Applications" [2010].</p> <p>WS 17 Deliver Energy efficient Capital Programmes where appropriate and as follows</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Borris-in-Ossory – Install Fine Bubble Diffused Aeration</li> </ol> <p>WS 18 Work in accordance with IW/LA MoU and Protocol on an agreed programme with LA planning to take in charge private housing estates Wastewater Infrastructure and transfer assets to IW.</p> <p>Rural Water and Wastewater Policy Objectives</p> <p>WS 19 Work in conjunction with the NFGWSs and with the support and funding of the DHPLG by way of the Rural Water Multi-Annual Programme 2019 to 2021 and subsequent programmes to - through various measures - improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of water services for rural dwellers where Irish Water services are not available and thereby sustain and enhance the social, economic and future prosperity of the rural water sector.</p> <p>WS 20 Support, monitor, advise and administer Group Water Schemes on behalf of the DHPLG in conjunction with the NFGWSs by implementation of Source Protection Works, Water Treatment Improvements, Amalgamation/Rationalisation of schemes and administering of Capital Replacement Costs</p> <p>WS 21 Continue to draw up and implement annual programmes for the monitoring of water quality in Group Water Schemes in accordance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended and as approved by the EPA.</p> <p>WS 22 Embed water conservation at the heart of water policy through prioritising resource management, abstraction control, source protection, tackling leakage and encouraging behavioural change.</p> <p>WS 23 Promoting water conservation and water resource management reflected in investment for leak detection and repair, network improvements, cost effective metering and awareness campaigns among the GWS.</p> <p>WS 24 Ensuring that rural water services investment decisions are aligned with the broad strategic aims of Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework and Improve the resilience of rural water supplies by supporting the implementation OF ing the following measures</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) New Group Water Schemes and extensions</li> <li>b) Transition of Group Water and Group Sewerage schemes to the Public (Irish Water) Water Sector</li> <li>c) Community Connections (Water &amp; Wastewater) Networks</li> <li>d) Innovation and Research.</li> </ol> <p>WS 25 Ensure that the scheme relating to private wells is administered effectively and that improvements to sources and/or treatment works are carried out in accordance with IW and EPA standards</p> <p>WS 26 Work in conjunction with stakeholders through various measures to improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of water services for consumers of Small Private Supplies where Irish Water services are not available and thereby sustain and enhance the social, economic and future prosperity of the rural water sector.</p> <p>WS 27 Support, monitor, advise and raise awareness among owner/operators of SPSs of their duties as water suppliers under the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 as amended to ensure that a safe and dependable water supply is available to those persons who avail of the service (Customers/service users/children etc).</p> |

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|       |  | <p>waste management by households, communities, and businesses, including waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling, and recovery.</p> <p>Objective 13.6<br/>Secure high-quality digital connectivity in Portarlington in line with the National Broad Band Plan and enable digital technology.</p> <p>Policy 15.4 Protect, manage, and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape, and environment of Portarlington in recognition of its importance as a natural resource that can contribute towards sustainable urban drainage, flood management, and climate action.</p> | <p>WS 28 Collaborate with stakeholders including LA Water and Environmental Services staff, the HSE, LEO staff, Laois Chamber, representatives from the educational, tourist, childcare and hospitality sectors to raise awareness among their members of the duties of the Owners/Operators in relation to the provision of clean and wholesome drinking water</p> <p>WS 29 Maintain and update its register of SPSSs and will focus their enforcement powers on those schemes that are non-compliant with the Drinking Water Regulations by carrying out Audits on these schemes and by further enforcement measures if improvements are not implemented. Where the option exists to connect to a public water supply, the water supplier will be encouraged to make an application to IW for a connection.</p> <p>Waste Recovery &amp; Disposal Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 1 Implement and support the strategic objectives of the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy – Ireland’s National Waste Policy 2020-2025.</p> <p>ES 2 Implement and support the strategic objectives of the Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 and any subsequent Waste Management Plan adopted during the current development plan period.</p> <p>ES 3 Promote circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, and to sustainably manage residual waste. New developments will be expected to take account of the provisions of the Waste Management Plan for the Region and observe those elements of it that relate to waste prevention and minimisation, waste recycling facilities, and the capacity for source segregation.</p> <p>Waste Management Enforcement Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 4 Implement the provisions of the Waste Management Act, 1996, as amended and associated Waste Regulations.</p> <p>ES 5 Investigate and take appropriate legal action against those involved in unauthorised waste activities.</p> <p>ES 6 Implement the provisions of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997, as amended and the Laois Litter Management Plan 2018 -2020 and any subsequent revisions.</p> <p>ES 7 Implement, complete and report to the EPA on the annual agreed Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI).</p> <p>ES 8 Encourage and support the segregation of food waste and the provision of separate collection of waste in accordance with the requirements of the EU (Household Food Waste &amp; Bio-Waste) Regulations 2015, the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations 2009, the Waste Framework Directive Regulations, 2011 and other relevant legislation.</p> <p>ES 9 Implement the provisions of the Laois Waste Management (Storage, Presentation and Segregation of Household &amp; Commercial) Waste Bye-Laws 2018 and to take enforcement action where necessary to protect the environment and local amenities.</p> <p>ES 10 Process and make recommendations of all Waste Facility Permit (WFP) and Certificate of Registration (COR) Applications under the relevant Regulations. To monitor and inspect all authorised facilities with WFPs &amp; CORs.</p> <p>ES 11 Require Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) to be prepared for larger scale projects and this requirement shall be assessed on a case by case basis as part of the development management process.</p> <p>ES 12 Require that all construction projects are carried out in accordance with Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects.</p> <p>ES 13 Encourage best environmental practice in all agricultural, industry, business and local authority activities.</p> <p>Civic Amenity Facilities &amp; Bring Bank Policy Objectives</p> <p>ES 14 Provide for, improve and maintain the network of bring infrastructure (e.g. civic amenity facilities, bring banks) in the County to facilitate the recycling and recovery of hazardous and non-hazardous municipal wastes.</p> <p>ES 15 Develop a 10-year roadmap for the strategic planning and development of the Kyletalesha Transfer Station and Civic Amenity Site.</p> <p>ES 16 Develop the Bring Bank Regional Contract to improve the quality of service and frequency of collection.</p> <p>RL 2 Facilitate the development of agriculture while ensuring that natural waters, wildlife habitats and conservation areas are protected from pollution.</p> <p><b>Offaly County Development Plan</b></p> <p>Water Services and Surface Water</p> <p>WSP-01 It is Council policy to ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements, a cleaner environment and climate change mitigation.</p> <p>WSP-02 It is Council policy to liaise and co-operate with Irish Water in the implementation and delivery of the ‘Water Services Strategic Plan’ (2015, under review in 2020), the ‘Irish Water Business Plan 2015-2021’, the ‘Irish Water National Water Resources Plan’ (expected in 2021) and the ‘Irish Water Investment Plan 2020-2024’ (or any amendment thereof) and other relevant investment works programmes of Irish Water, to provide infrastructure to service settlements in accordance with the Council’s Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy.</p> <p>WSP-03 It is Council policy to work in conjunction with Irish Water to protect existing water supply and wastewater infrastructure, to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the timely delivery of new water supply and wastewater infrastructure to facilitate future growth in accordance with the Council’s Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy.</p> <p>WSP-04 It is Council policy to require developments to connect to public wastewater infrastructure and public water supplies, where available, including group water schemes, unless otherwise approved by the Planning Authority.</p> <p>WSP-05 It is Council policy as the Regulatory Authority to promote the protection of private water sources, the development of community connections (water and wastewater), and improvement works to septic tanks in accordance with national policy and regulations, and to administer the multi-annual Rural Water Programme (2019-2021).</p> <p>WSP-06 It is Council policy to ensure that development is permitted in tandem with available water supply and wastewater treatment and to manage</p> |

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|       |  |  | <p>development, so that new schemes are permitted only where adequate capacity or resources exists or will become available within the life of a planning permission. Prior to applying for planning permission, applicants shall consult with Irish Water regarding feasibility and capacity for water services connection. Applicants shall submit proof of documentation that connection to a group water scheme has been granted, where applicable.</p> <p>WSP-07 It is Council policy to ensure the delivery and phasing of services in the county is subject to the required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes and shall avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.</p> <p>WSP-08 It is Council policy to ensure any proposal for geothermal or other energy subsurface exploration is accompanied by an assessment that addresses the potential impacts on groundwater quality.</p> <p>Water Supply</p> <p>WSP-09 It is Council policy to collaborate with and support, as relevant and appropriate, Irish Water in its role as the lead authority for water services to provide an adequate and appropriate drinking water supply that complies with the EU (Drinking Water) Regulations and the Drinking Water Regulations 2014 (as amended), and any future amendments. In this respect, Offaly County Council will have regard to the Environmental Protection Agency 2019 publication 'Drinking Water Report for Public Water Supplies 2018' (and any subsequent update) in the establishment and maintenance of water sources in the county, and in conjunction with Irish Water, undertake recommendations made by the EPA arising from any failure to meet drinking water standards and any enlistment on the EPA's remedial Action List.</p> <p>WSP-10 It is Council policy to engage with Irish Water to endeavour to facilitate developments which have requirements for water by allowing potential surface and ground water resources of County Offaly and the potential water resources of the River Shannon to be utilised, where practicable and possible, subject to appropriate safeguards.</p> <p>WSP-11 It is Council policy to promote the conservation and sustainable use of water in existing and new development within the county and to encourage demand management measures among all water users including rain water harvesting and grey water recycling.</p> <p>WSP-12 It is Council policy to monitor and regulate Group Water Schemes in accordance with national policy and regulations.</p> <p>WSP-13 It is Council policy to protect the Irish Water Eastern and Midlands Water Supply Project pipeline corridor from inappropriate development that would prejudice the delivery of the project and to refer any planning applications within the development corridor to Irish Water for comment.</p> <p>Waste Water</p> <p>WSP-14 It is Council policy to co-operate and support Irish Water to eliminate untreated discharges from settlements in the short-term, while planning strategically for long-term growth in tandem with Project Ireland 2040 and in increasing compliance with the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive to 90% by the end of 2021, to 99% by 2027 and to 100% by 2040.</p> <p>WSP-15 It is Council policy to support strategic wastewater treatment infrastructure investment by Irish Water and to support Irish Water in providing and maintaining adequate and appropriate wastewater treatment infrastructure to service zoned lands and developments over the lifetime of the Plan in accordance with the Council's Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy.</p> <p>WSP-16 It is Council policy to liaise with Irish Water to ensure the compliance of wastewater treatment systems with existing licences, EU Water Framework Directive, River Basin Management Plan, the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the EU Habitats Directive.</p> <p>WSP-17 It is Council policy to encourage and support a changeover from septic tanks/private wastewater treatment plants to public collection networks wherever feasible, subject to connection agreements with Irish Water and to ensure that any future development connects to the public wastewater infrastructure where it is available.</p> <p>WSP-18 It is Council policy to ensure that the proposed wastewater treatment system for development in unserved areas complies with the relevant EPA Codes of Practice.</p> <p>WSP-19 It is Council policy to require / implement appropriate buffer zones surrounding all effluent treatment plants suitable to the size and operation of each plant.</p> <p>WSP-20 It is Council policy to have regard to the policies and objectives contained in Irish Water's National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan.</p> <p>WSP-21 Private wastewater treatment plants for multi-house developments will not normally be permitted.</p> <p>Surface Water</p> <p>WSP-22 It is Council policy to ensure adequate surface water drainage systems are in place which meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan and to promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems.</p> <p>WSP-23 It is Council policy to limit and manage the permitted stormwater run-off from all new developments. The maximum permitted surface outflow from any new development shall be restricted to that of a greenfield site before any development takes place unless otherwise agreed with Offaly County Council.</p> <p>WSP-24 It is Council policy to require new development to provide a separate foul and surface water drainage system and to incorporate Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).</p> <p>WSP-25 It is Council policy to promote the use of green infrastructure, for example green roofs, green walls, planting and green spaces for surface water run-off retention purposes, in the interests of flood mitigation and climate change adaptation.</p> <p>General</p> <p>WSO-01 It is an objective of the Council to work closely with Irish Water to service development with significant economic development potential and to align the supply of water services to the envisaged settlement size as per the Council's Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy. The availability of water services must not be a pre-cursor to large-scale growth in inappropriate locations.</p> <p>Water Supply</p> <p>WSO-02 It is an objective of the Council to support Irish Water's National Programme of Investment to reduce leakage minimising the demand for capital</p> |



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|       |  |  | <p>investment.</p> <p>WSO-03 It is an objective of the Council to co-operate with Irish Water in the delivery of the Eastern and Midlands Water Supply Project and to ensure the maximum benefit from this project to County Offaly, in particular with respect to economic development potential and security of supply.</p> <p>WSO-04 It is an objective of the Council to engage with Irish Water to examine significant raw water sources which may be made redundant by the Water Supply Project for the Eastern and Midlands Region with a view to reserving and protecting them for future back up or 'windfall' type economic development opportunities where high water use is required.</p> <p>WSO-05 It is an objective of the Council to provide guidance and advice regarding the protection of water supply to private wells with the overall responsibility for protection remaining with the householder.</p> <p>Waste Water</p> <p>WSO-06 It is an objective of the Council to support appropriate options for the extraction of energy and other resources from sewage sludge subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.</p> <p>WSO-07 It is an objective of the Council to support the servicing of small towns and villages through the serviced sites initiative to provide an alternative to one-off housing in the countryside, in accordance with National Policy Outcome 18b of the National Planning Framework and Regional Policy Objective 4.78 of the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.</p> <p>Surface Water</p> <p>WSO-08 It is an objective of the Council to improve surface water infrastructure and sustainable drainage and to reduce the risk of flooding, to facilitate the growth of settlements as per the county's settlement hierarchy.</p> <p>WSO-09 It is an objective of the Council to utilise, where appropriate, the provisions of Section 48 and 49 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) to generate financial contributions towards the capital costs of providing surface water infrastructure in the county.</p> <p>Waste Management</p> <p>ENVP-12 It is Council policy to continue to fulfil its duties under the Waste Management (certification of historic unlicensed waste disposal and recovery activity) Regulations 2008, including those in relation to the identification and registration of closed landfills.</p> <p>ENVP-13 It is Council policy to require the provision of recycling infrastructure where it is considered necessary and will assess requirements for recycling facilities on a case by case basis as part of the development management process.</p> <p>ENVP-14 It is Council policy to require Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) to be prepared for larger scale projects and this requirement shall be assessed on a case by case basis as part of the development management process. Where a CEMP is required, it shall be prepared in accordance with the criteria set out in Section 11.5.2 of this Plan.</p> <p>ENVO-05 It is an objective of the Council to implement the Eastern-Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021; the Council's Litter Management Plan and Waste Bye-Laws.</p> <p>Construction and Environmental Management Plan</p> <p>Construction Environment Management Plans (CEMPs) shall be prepared for larger scale projects and this requirement shall be assessed on a case by case basis as part of the development management process. Such plans shall incorporate relevant mitigation measures contained in any accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment Report or Appropriate Assessment and in this Development Plan. CEMPs shall typically provide details of intended construction practice for the proposed development, including where applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location and details of site compounds, refuse storage areas, construction site offices and staff facilities, site security fencing and hoardings, on-site staff car parking;</li> <li>• Details of construction traffic - timing and routing, directional signage, measures to obviate queuing, alternative arrangements for pedestrians and vehicles, and measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris;</li> <li>• Details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels;</li> <li>• Containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained; such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater;</li> <li>• Disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil, including compliance with 2006 Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects, Department of the Environment;</li> <li>• A water and sediment management plan, providing for means to ensure that surface water runoff is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local water courses or drains;</li> <li>• Details of a water quality monitoring and sampling plan;</li> <li>• If peat is encountered - a peat storage, handling and reinstatement management plan;</li> <li>• Measures adopted during construction to prevent the spread of invasive species (such as Japanese Knotweed);</li> <li>• Appointment of an ecological clerk of works at site investigation, preparation and construction phases; and</li> </ul> <p>Details of appropriate mitigation measures for lighting specifically designed to minimise impacts to biodiversity, including bats.</p> <p>Tourism and Infrastructure Capacity</p> <p>Tourist and recreation facilities, in particular accommodation, shall be generally located within towns and villages unless;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comprehensive justification of the need for the development by its nature and space requirements to be located outside towns and villages, for example, golf courses, swimming, angling, sailing/boating, pier/marina development, water sports, equestrian and pony trekking routes, adventure/interpretative centres and associated ancillary uses, tourist related leisure facilities including walking and cycling;</li> <li>• Evidence that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact upon the scenic value, heritage value and the environmental,</li> </ul> |

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|                          |   |   | <p>ecological or conservation quality of primary tourism asset(s) and its their general environment;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations/along particular routes have been considered and mitigation measures proposed. Such a consideration should include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals;</li> <li>• Compliance with development management standards set out in this chapter; and</li> <li>• Evidence that, where feasible, existing ruinous or disused buildings or existing heritage buildings have been re-used to maximum potential.</li> </ul> <p>This list is not exhaustive and the Council may consider other requirements contained in the chapter on a case by case basis with planning applications should the need arise.</p>  |
| <b>Cultural Heritage</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities.</li> </ul> | <p>Policy 14.1<br/>Protect, conserve and enhance the character, setting and special interest of the built heritage of Portarlington, including all Protected Structures and their curtilage, Recorded Monuments and Places in accordance with best conservation practice.</p> <p>Policy 14.2<br/>Protect and conserve important heritage items such as, gates, street furniture, post boxes and other significant historic features of interest in Portarlington, and support the re-introduction of traditional features on Protected Structures where there is evidence that such features (e.g. window styles, finishes etc.) previously existed.</p> <p>Policy 14.3<br/>Ensure that development proposals do not obscure views, principal elevations or the character and setting of Protected Structures.</p> <p>Policy 14.4<br/>Prevent inappropriate alterations to protected structures, and to prohibit the demolition of any protected structure unless the relevant local authority is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist. The demolition of a protected structure with the retention of its façade will likewise not generally be permitted.</p> <p>Policy 14.5<br/>Positively consider proposals to improve, alter, extend or change the use of Protected Structures so as to render them viable for modern use, subject to suitable design, siting, materials and construction methods and subject to consultation with suitably qualified Conservation Architect(s).</p> <p>Policy 14.6<br/>Promote and encourage heritage-led regeneration in Portarlington, and tackle dereliction and vacancy so as to improve the quality of life and the interesting and attractive uniqueness of the town.</p> | <p><b>Laois County Development Plan</b></p> <p>Policy Objectives for Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>AH 1 Manage development in a manner that protects and conserves the integrity and character of archaeological heritage of the county which avoids adverse impacts on sites, monuments, settings, features or objects of significant historical or archaeological interest and secure the preservation in-situ or by record of all sites and features of historical and archaeological interest.</p> <p>AH 2 Support the preservation or conservation of historically significant street patterns, building lines and plot widths in its towns and villages as well as the preservation of features such as town walls, historic revetments, and public realm features such as granite kerbing, historic drinking fountains, cobbles, vent pipes whether or not they benefit from protection in their own right.</p> <p>AH 3 Protect the intrinsic value, character, integrity and settings of monuments and places in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMPs) and any forthcoming statutory register and protect Zones of Archaeological Potential against inappropriate development.</p> <p>AH 4 In areas of archaeological potential, where groundworks are proposed, ensure that all works are undertaken to the highest standard and the resultant information made publicly available. Developers will be required to have regard to Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers (ICOMOS, 2000) in planning and executing development in sensitive areas. The Council favours the preservation in-situ of archaeological remains, where areas of archaeological potential are located in town centres or villages, preservation of archaeological remains by record will be considered.</p> <p>AH 5 Encourage, where practicable, the provision of public access and signage to sites identified in the Record of Monuments and Places under the direct ownership, guardianship or control of the Council and/or the State.</p> <p>AH 6 Work closely with the relevant State bodies to deliver the conservation objectives of the Rock of Dunamase and redevelopment of Fort Protector to secure funding for the preservation and development of these culturally important sites.</p> <p>AH 7 Require visual impact statements for developments within the area around the Rock of Dunamase in order to assess the potential impacts of development in the area.</p> <p>AH 8 Work with stakeholders including the OPW, the Heritage Council, the Arts Council, local communities, Bord Failte and businesses to support the development of heritage and cultural tourism in County Laois .</p> <p>AH 9 Maximise the potential of Dunrally Viking Fort, as a heritage/cultural and tourism site.</p> <p>AH 10 Protect where appropriate industrial heritage structures or elements of significance identified in the Laois Industrial Archaeology Survey by adding them to the Record of Protected Structures during the lifetime of the Development Plan.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Protected Structures</p> <p>PS 1 Consult with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in considering planning applications that may affect Protected Structures or Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA). The Council will have regard to comments made by the Department and relevant guidelines such as the Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DAHG, 2011) and other pertinent guidelines regarding energy ratings for Protected Structures.</p> <p>PS 2 Protect and conserve buildings, structures and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures in accordance with 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2004 and ensure the effective promotion of the Architectural Heritage provisions of Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and therefore the protection of Laois's built heritage, including Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and Protected Structures.</p> <p>PS 3 Any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a Protected Structure must be prepared by suitably qualified persons and Accompanied by appropriate documentation as outlined in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities [DAHG, 2011] to enable a proper assessment of the proposed works and their impact on the structure or area and be carried out to best practice conservation standards. Its setting will be considered against the following criteria, and whether it is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Sensitive sited and designed;</li> <li>b) Compatible with the special character;</li> <li>c) Views of principal elevations of the protected structures are not obscured or negatively impacted;</li> <li>d) Of a premium quality of design and appropriate in terms of the proposed scale, mass, height, density, layout, and materials</li> </ol> <p>so that the integrity of the structure and its curtilage is preserved and enhanced. Where appropriate, the Protected Structure status is used as a stimulus to the imaginative and considered design of new elements.</p> <p>PS 4 Where the restoration or refurbishment of a Protected Structure or a key Architectural Conservation Area building that is in poor or fair condition is proposed and is for a purpose compatible with the character of the building, the relaxation of development management standards on unit sizes, amenity space or parking will be considered by the Council.</p> |

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|       |  | <p>Policy 14.7<br/>Resist and discourage the demolition of vernacular architecture in Portarlington, and where appropriate promote the sympathetic renewal, maintenance, adaptation, and re-use of historic building stock, and encourage the retention and repair of original fabric such as windows, doors, wall renders, roof coverings, shopfronts, and other significant features, whether protected or not.</p> <p>Policy 14.8<br/>Secure the preservation (either in situ or by record) of all archaeological monuments in Portarlington included in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and their settings, and of all sites and features of significant archaeological or historical interest, including potential and previously unknown sites or features, in consultation with the National Monuments Service in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.</p> <p>Policy 14.9<br/>Safeguard the archaeological heritage located within Portarlington and avoid negative impacts on sites, monuments, features, or objects of significant historical or archaeological interest.</p> <p>Policy 14.10<br/>Ensure the setting and character of Lea Castle is safeguarded and enhanced in the assessment of new development proposals and enhance connectivity and access as opportunities arise.</p> <p>Objective 14.1<br/>Support and facilitate heritage-led regeneration in Portarlington in line with the objectives of the 'Portarlington Regeneration Strategy 2030'.</p> <p>Objective 14.2<br/>Designate an Architectural Conservation Area in Portarlington to ensure the protection of all those buildings, spaces, archaeological sites, trees, street furniture, views and other aspects which form an essential part of the traditional core of the town.</p> <p>Objective 14.3<br/>Conserve, protect and enhance the built and archaeological heritage of Portarlington, including all Protected Structures and attendant grounds, Recorded Monuments and Places in accordance with best conservation practice.</p> | <p>PS 5 Refuse planning permission for the demolition of any protected structure unless the Council is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist. The demolition of a protected structure with the retention of its façade will likewise not generally be permitted.</p> <p>PS 6 Favourably consider the change of use of any structure included on the Record of Protected Structures provided such a change of use does not adversely impact on its intrinsic character. In certain cases, the Planning Authority may relax site zoning restrictions / development standards in order to secure the preservation and restoration of the structure.</p> <p>PS 7 Review and update the Record of Protected Structures on an on-going basis and to make additions and deletions as appropriate</p> <p>PS 8 Integrate climate-change adaptation measures into all heritage works and maintenance plans by demonstrating green ways of working in historic buildings, ensuring that the carbon footprint of adaptation measures is considered</p> <p>PS 9 Promote the repair and reuse of existing building stock, including heritage buildings, as a means of avoiding unnecessary carbon outlays with new build</p> <p>PS 10 Support proposals to improve the thermal performance of historic buildings with renewable energy technologies. Such proposals shall be sensitive to traditional methods of construction to ensure that the proposed works are appropriate and do not cause damage to the structure, require the removal of historic fabric such as original windows, doors and floors, or have a detrimental visual impact.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for ACA</p> <p>ACA 1 Ensure that any development, modifications, alterations, or extensions within an ACA are sited and designed appropriately, and are not detrimental to the character of the structure or to its setting or the general character of the ACA and are in keeping with any Architectural Conservation Area Statement of Character Guidance Documents prepared for the relevant ACA.</p> <p>ACA 2 Demolition of buildings or substantial parts of structures in cases where those structures make a positive contribution to the special character of the ACA will not be acceptable in principle. Only in exceptional circumstances, where the redevelopment or replacement structures would produce substantial benefits for the community which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition, would demolition of this nature be considered.</p> <p>ACA 3 Investigate the designation of further ACAs at appropriate locations throughout and prepare a character statement appraisal and area specific policy for each ACA to include Stradbally, Mountmellick Mountrath and Portarlington, (the latter in collaboration within Offaly County Council).</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Vernacular Structures</p> <p>VS 1 Recognise the importance of the contribution of vernacular architecture which may not be protected to the promote where feasible the protection, retention and appropriate revitalisation and use of the vernacular built heritage, including structures that contribute to landscape and streetscape character and discourage the demolition of these structures;</p> <p>VS 2 Resist the demolition of vernacular architecture, in particular thatched cottages and farmhouses and to encourage their sensitive reuse having regard to the intrinsic character of the structure.</p> <p>VS 3 Ensure that both new build, and extensions to vernacular buildings are of an appropriate design and do not detract from the buildings character.</p> <p>VS 4 Seek the repair and retention of traditional timber and/or rendered shop fronts and pub fronts, including those that may not be protected structures.</p> <p>VS 5 Develop and publish guidelines on the conservation and appropriate reuse of Local Authority Cottages and similar vernacular structures.</p> <p>VS 6 Have regard, where appropriate, to guidance in the DAHG Guidelines and conservation best practice in assessing proposed interventions and planning applications relating to vernacular structures, traditional farmhouses, their curtilage, out buildings and settings.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Historic Gardens, Country Houses and Demesnes</p> <p>CH 1 Ensure that new development will not adversely affect the site, setting or views to and from historic gardens and designed landscapes.</p> <p>CH 2 Require that any proposals for new development in an historic garden or demesne include an appraisal of the landscape, designed views and vistas, and an assessment of significant trees or groups of trees, as appropriate.</p> <p>CH 3 Build on the information compiled as part of the National Survey of Historic Gardens &amp; Designed Landscapes, and to carry out a survey to assess the intactness of these assets, including developing a strategy for their conservation, restoration and development.</p> <p>CH 4 Assess the demesnes and historic designed landscapes within Laois and promote the conservation of their essential character, both built and natural, while allowing for appropriate re-use</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>AH 1 Manage development in a manner that protects and conserves the integrity and character of archaeological heritage of the county which avoids adverse impacts on sites, monuments, settings, features or objects of significant historical or archaeological interest and secure the preservation in-situ or by record of all sites and features of historical and archaeological interest.</p> <p>AH 2 Support the preservation or conservation of historically significant street patterns, building lines and plot widths in its towns and villages as well as the preservation of features such as town walls, historic revetments, and public realm features such as granite kerbing, historic drinking fountains, cobbles, vent pipes whether or not they benefit from protection in their own right.</p> <p>AH 3 Protect the intrinsic value, character, integrity and settings of monuments and places in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMPs) and any forthcoming statutory register and protect Zones of Archaeological Potential against inappropriate development.</p> <p>AH 4 In areas of archaeological potential, where groundworks are proposed, ensure that all works are undertaken to the highest standard and the resultant information made publicly available. Developers will be required to have regard to Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers (ICOMOS, 2000) in planning and executing development in sensitive areas. The Council favours the preservation in-situ of archaeological remains, where areas of archaeological potential are located in town centres or villages, preservation of archaeological remains by record will be</p> |

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|       |  |  | <p>considered.</p> <p>AH 5 Encourage, where practicable, the provision of public access and signage to sites identified in the Record of Monuments and Places under the direct ownership, guardianship or control of the Council and/or the State.</p> <p>AH 6 Work closely with the relevant State bodies to deliver the conservation objectives of the Rock of Dunamase and redevelopment of Fort Protector to secure funding for the preservation and development of these culturally important sites.</p> <p>AH 7 Require visual impact statements for developments within the area around the Rock of Dunamase in order to assess the potential impacts of development in the area.</p> <p>AH 8 Work with stakeholders including the OPW, the Heritage Council, the Arts Council, local communities, Bord Failte and businesses to support the development of heritage and cultural tourism in County Laois .</p> <p>AH 9 Maximise the potential of Dunrally Viking Fort, as a heritage/cultural and tourism site.</p> <p>AH 10 Protect where appropriate industrial heritage structures or elements of significance identified in the Laois Industrial Archaeology Survey by adding them to the Record of Protected Structures during the lifetime of the Development Plan.</p> <p><b>Offaly County Development Plan</b></p> <p><b>Protected Structures</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure the protection, sympathetic and sensitive modification, alteration, extension or reuse of protected structures or parts of protected structures, and the immediate surrounds included and proposed for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, together with the integrity of their character and setting.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure the protection of the curtilage of protected structures or proposed protected structures and to prohibit inappropriate development within the curtilage or attendant grounds of a protected structure which would adversely impact on the special character of the protected structure including cause loss of or damage to the special character of the protected structure and loss of or damage to, any structures of architectural heritage value within the curtilage of the protected structure.</p> <p>It is Council policy to promote best practice and the use of skilled specialist practitioners in the conservation of, and any works to, protected structures. Method statements should make reference to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's Advice Series on how best to repair and maintain historic buildings.</p> <p>It is Council policy to favourably consider the change of use of any structure included on the Record of Protected Structures provided such a change of use does not adversely impact on its intrinsic character and is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.</p> <p>It is Council policy to actively encourage uses that are compatible with the character of protected structures.</p> <p>It is Council policy to retain where practicable a protected structure which has been damaged by fire, and to retain those elements of that structure that have survived (either in whole or in part) and that contribute to its special interest.</p> <p>It is Council policy to prohibit the demolition of any protected structure unless the Council is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist. The demolition of a protected structure with the retention of its façade will likewise not generally be permitted.</p> <p>It is Council policy to require an Architectural Heritage Assessment Report, as described in Appendix B of the Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (2013), to accompany all applications involving a protected structure.</p> <p>It is Council policy to advise owners of protected structures in preparation of funding applications under Built Heritage Scheme of the Historic Structures Fund.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that in the event of a planning application being granted for development within the curtilage of a protected structure, the proposed works to the protected structure should occur, where appropriate, in the first phase of the development to prevent endangerment, abandonment and dereliction of the structure.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that measures to upgrade the energy efficiency of Protected Structures and historic buildings are sensitive to traditional construction methods and materials and do not have a detrimental physical, aesthetic or visual impact on the structure. They should follow the principles and direction given in the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's publication Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to review the Record of Protected Structures on an on-going basis and make additions, deletions and corrections as appropriate over the period of this Plan.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to prepare a Buildings at Risk Register to prevent the endangerment of Protected Structures.</p> <p><b>Architectural Conservation Areas</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage the retention of original windows, doors, renders, roof coverings, street furniture and other significant features of historic buildings and landscape features within Architectural Conservation Areas.</p> <p>It is Council policy to proactively promote conservation through the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and other schemes available to the Council.</p> <p>It is Council policy to preserve the character of Geashill Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and any future ACA's in County Offaly by ensuring that any new development within or contiguous to the ACA is sympathetic to the character of the area and that the design is appropriate in terms of scale, height, plot density, layout, materials and finishes having regard to the advice given in the Statements of Character for each area.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to investigate the designation of further Architectural Conservation Areas at appropriate locations throughout the county.</p> <p><b>Vernacular Buildings</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage the protection, retention, appreciation and appropriate revitalisation of the vernacular heritage of Offaly.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consider the guidance in "The Thatched Houses of Kildare" and "Reusing Farm Buildings, A Kildare Perspective" published by Kildare</p> |



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|       |  |  | <p>County Council in assessing planning applications in County Offaly relating to thatched cottages and traditional farm buildings.</p> <p>It is Council policy to preserve the character and setting (for example, gates, gate piers and courtyards) of vernacular buildings where deemed appropriate by the planning authority.</p> <p>It is Council policy to seek the repair and retention of traditional timber and/or rendered shop fronts and pub fronts, including those that may not be protected structures.</p> <p>It is Council policy to communicate and work with owners of thatch buildings regarding the availability of conservation grants and funding.</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage where appropriate the covering of thatch with metal, as a measure for the protection of buildings which are unoccupied and showing signs of considerable distress.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support proposals to refurbish vernacular structures that are in a run down or derelict condition, provided that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate traditional building materials and methods are used to carry out repairs to the historic fabric; and</li> <li>• Proposals for extensions to vernacular structures are reflective and proportionate to the existing building and do not erode the setting and design qualities of the original structure which make it attractive.</li> </ul> <p>It is an objective of the Council to identify and retain good examples of vernacular architecture and historic street furniture in situ, for example, cast-iron post boxes, water pumps, signage, street lighting, kerbing and traditional road and street surface coverings.</p> <p><b>Industrial Heritage</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to protect the industrial heritage of Offaly, including mills, historic industrial buildings, canals and historic bridges.</p> <p>It is Council policy to utilise the information provided within Mills of County Offaly: An Industrial Heritage Survey (2009) when assessing development proposals for surviving industrial heritage sites.</p> <p>It is Council policy to protect and enhance the built and natural heritage of the Grand Canal and ensure that development within its vicinity is sensitively designed and does not have a detrimental effect on the character of the canal, its built elements and its natural heritage values and that it adheres to the Waterways Ireland's Heritage Plan 2016-2020.</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage appropriate change of use and reuse of industrial buildings, provided such a change does not seriously impact on the intrinsic character of the structure and that all works are carried out in accordance with best conservation practice.</p> <p>It is Council policy to seek the retention and appropriate repair/maintenance of the historic bridges and harbours of the county whether they are protected structures or not.</p> <p>It is Council policy to restrict vehicular access onto public roads that were formerly towpaths and any development permitted with access off a towpath must be screened effectively with trees and hedging. In relation to planning applications for housing in the open countryside with access proposed off towpaths, applicants must demonstrate compliance with Policy SSP-27 as towpaths are located within Natural Heritage Areas and Areas of High Amenity.</p> <p><b>Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage the protection, conservation, promotion and enhancement of Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes in the county and support public awareness, enjoyment of and access to these sites where appropriate.</p> <p>It is Council policy to encourage the conservation, preservation, restoration and protection in their original setting of mausoleums and monuments: follies, grottoes; garden buildings and other structures of particular beauty or historic, environmental, architectural or industrial significance.</p> <p>It is Council policy to discourage development that would lead to a loss of, or cause damage to, the character, the principle components of, or the setting of Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes.</p> <p>Houses, Gardens and Demesnes.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consider the "Guidance Notes for the Appraisal of Historic Gardens, Demesnes, Estates and their Settings" published by Cork County Council 2006 in the appraisal and description of the impacts of proposed developments in County Offaly within or in close proximity to country houses and demesnes on historic designed landscapes, demesnes and gardens.</p> <p><b>Archaeological Heritage</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to support and promote the protection and appropriate management and sympathetic enhancement of the county's archaeological heritage within the Plan area, in particular by implementing the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended).</p> <p>It is Council policy to seek to promote awareness of and access to archaeological sites in the county where appropriate.</p> <p>It is Council policy to consult with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG) in relation to archaeological sites within and/or adjoining a proposed development.</p> <p>It is Council policy to facilitate the identification of important archaeological landscapes in the county.</p> <p>It is Council policy that any development that may, due to its size, location or nature, have implications for archaeological heritage (including both sites and areas of archaeological potential / significance) shall be subject to an archaeological assessment. When dealing with proposals for development that would impact upon archaeological sites and/or features, there will be presumption in favour of the 'preservation in situ' of archaeological remains and settings, in accordance with Government policy. Where permission for such proposals is granted, the Planning Authority will require the developer to have the site works supervised by a licenced archaeologist.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that archaeological excavation is carried out according to best practice as outlined by the National Monuments Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the National Museum of Ireland and the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland and to protect previously unknown archaeological sites and features, where they are discovered during development works.</p> |

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|                  |   |   | <p>It is Council policy to ensure the protection and preservation of underwater and terrestrial archaeological sites, both known and potential in riverine or lacustrine locations including wrecks such as the remains of bridges.</p> <p>It is Council policy to require archaeological assessment, including underwater archaeological assessment where relevant, for such developments that due to their location, size or nature may have implications for archaeological heritage. Such developments include those that are located at or close to an archaeological monument or site, those that are extensive in terms of area (0.5 hectares or more) or length (1 kilometre or more and developments that require an Environmental Impact Statement.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to protect archaeological sites and monuments, and archaeological objects, which are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, and to seek their preservation in situ (or at a minimum, preservation by record) through the planning process.</p> <p>Monastic Sites</p> <p>It is Council policy to retain the nominated status of the area comprising the National Monument at Clonmacnoise, enclosing eskers, Mongans Bog, Clonmacnoise callows, Fin Lough and the limestone pavement at Clorhane as the "Clonmacnoise Heritage Zone" in accordance with the recommendations of the study of the area carried out by the Environmental Sciences Unit of Trinity College, Dublin as shown in Figure 10.7 of this Plan.</p> <p>It is Council policy to investigate the potential of Durrow Demesne as a public amenity and tourism asset.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support and promote the protection and appropriate management of all monastic sites in the county.</p> <p>Mass Rocks and Holy Wells</p> <p>It is Council policy to preserve, protect and, where necessary, enhance mass rocks and holy wells in the County.</p> <p>The Council acknowledges the nomination by the Government of Ireland, of two Monastic sites, Clonmacnoise in its own right and Durrow, as a suite of potential sites, on the tentative list for inclusion to the UNESCO World Heritage sites list. It is an objective of the Council to explore the potential of further designating the Monastic Sites at Clonmacnoise and Durrow as prospective UNESCO World Heritage Sites.</p>   |
| <b>Landscape</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape.</li> </ul> | <p>Also refer to measures under Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna and Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>Policy 15.4 Protect, manage, and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape, and environment of Portarlington in recognition of its importance as a natural resource that can contribute towards sustainable urban drainage, flood management, and climate action.</p> <p>Objective 15.8 Seek to preserve and protect trees that have a particular local amenity, conservation or landscape value and require the planting of new native tree species in all new developments.</p> <p>Objective 15.11 Protect and preserve landscape features which significantly contribute to green infrastructure in Portarlington, including trees, hedgerows, woodlands, wetlands, watercourses, and other habitats.</p> | <p>Also refer to measures under Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna and Cultural Heritage</p> <p><b>Laois County Development Plan</b></p> <p>Policy Objectives for Landscape Character Areas</p> <p>LCA 1 Ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity, as indicated in Table 11.6 of the Plan, is an important factor in determining development uses In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design, type and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations</p> <p>LCA 2 Protect and enhance the county's landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and, where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the existing local landscape and conserve valuable habitat including any European and National Designations</p> <p>LCA 3 Seek to ensure that local landscape features, including historic features and buildings, hedgerows, shelter belts and stone walls, are retained, protected and enhanced where appropriate, so as to preserve the local landscape and character of an area, whilst providing for future development</p> <p>LCA 4 Seek to minimise the individual and cumulative adverse visual impacts that local concentrations of one-off housing, outside of settlements, may have on Hills and Upland, River Corridor and Lakes and Mountain landscape character areas or High Sensitivity areas. In this regard, in locations where the Council considers that there is a risk of individual or cumulative adverse impacts, the Council will only consider proposals for housing developments where a need for the dwelling has been demonstrated in accordance with the criteria contained in the Rural Housing Policy contained in Chapter 4</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Hills and Uplands Areas and Mountain Areas</p> <p>LCA 5 Ensure that development will not have a disproportionate visual impact (due to excessive bulk, scale or inappropriate siting) and will not significantly interfere with or detract from scenic upland vistas, when viewed from areas nearby, scenic routes, viewpoints and settlements</p> <p>LCA 6 Ensure that developments on steep slopes (i.e. &gt;10%) will not be conspicuous or have a disproportionate visual impact on the surrounding environment as seen from relevant scenic routes, viewpoints and settlements</p> <p>LCA 7 Facilitate, where appropriate, developments that have a functional and locational requirement to be situated on steep or elevated sites (e.g. reservoirs, telecommunication masts or wind energy structures) where residual adverse visual impacts are minimised or mitigated</p> <p>LCA 8 Maintain the visual integrity of areas which have retained a largely undisturbed upland character and Respect the remote character and existing low-density development in these areas.</p> <p>LCA 9 Have regard to the potential for screening vegetation when evaluating proposals for development within the uplands</p> <p>LCA 10 Actively propose the designation of the Slieve Blooms as a Special Amenity Area and seek an Order to that effect.</p> <p>LCA 11 Protect the positive contribution that views across adjacent lowland areas and landmarks within the landscape make to the overall landscape character.</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Lowland Agricultural Areas</p> <p>LCA 12 Recognise that this lowland landscape character area includes areas of significant landscape and ecological value, which are worthy of protection, particularly the 18th and 19th century estate landscapes and associated parkland &amp; woodland to develop them as a tourism resource.</p> <p>LCA 13 Continue to permit development that can utilise existing structures, settlement areas and infrastructure, whilst taking account of the visual absorption opportunities provided by existing topography and vegetation</p> <p>LCA 14 Recognise that the lowlands are made up of a variety of working landscapes, which are critical resources for sustaining the economic and social wellbeing of the county</p> <p>LCA 15 Promote good agricultural practices to create a sustainable rural economy and support incentives for smaller rural/family farms to manage their land to avoid loss of hedgerows and field patterns.</p> |

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| Topic | Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated | Joint Local Area Plan measures, including: | Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:  |
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|       |  |  | <p>Policy Objectives for River Corridors and Lakes Areas</p> <p>LCA 16 Recognise the importance of river corridors for scenic value, ecology, history, culture and for recreational purposes such as walking, cycling and various on-water activities;</p> <p>LCA 17 Maintain the rivers throughout the county whilst ensuring that all works are carried out subject to appropriate environmental assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, in respect of any proposed development likely to have an impact on a designated natural heritage site, site proposed to be designated and any additional sites that may be designated during the period of this Plan</p> <p>LCA 18 Preserve riverside historic features and their landscape settings and Conserve valuable habitats focused on and around river corridors and estuaries including European and national designations</p> <p>LCA 19 Recognise the potential constraints on development created by river flood plains and the value of these flood plains as increasingly rare habitats</p> <p>LCA 20 Avoid unsustainable exploitation of watercourses, e.g. for abstraction and dilution of effluent, to the point that these water courses lose their ecological and amenity value</p> <p>LCA 21 Collaborate with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Waterways Ireland and other relevant stakeholders to facilitate public access to waterway corridors and maintain and enhance the natural character of rivers, lakes and canals by reserving land to facilitate walking, cycling and other non-noise generating recreational activities</p> <p>LCA 22 Explore the establishment of the Barrow/Nore Valley and the Grand Canal as Areas of Special Amenity, as per section 202 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Peatland Areas</p> <p>LCA 23 Recognise the importance of peatlands for ecology, history, culture and for alternative energy production</p> <p>LCA 24 Conserve valuable habitats including any European and national designations</p> <p>LCA 25 Support the identification of projects that have the potential to achieve commercial value such as industrial developments, renewable energy, tourism developments etc. while at the same time promoting high environmental standards and supporting Biodiversity objectives</p> <p>LCA 26 Support the restoration of peatlands on suitable sites</p> <p>LCA 27 Recognise that intact boglands are critical natural resources for ecological and environmental reasons and recognise that cutaway and cut-over boglands represent degraded landscapes and/or brownfield sites and thus are potentially robust to absorb a variety of appropriate developments</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Urban Fringe Areas</p> <p>LCA 28 Diversify the urban fringe by developing mixed-use amenity areas, which will create a landscape buffer creating a transition between urban and rural areas</p> <p>LCA 29 Define the urban fringe with planting of native species and mixed woodland to tie into existing rural landscape</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Rolling Hill Areas</p> <p>LCA 30 Maintain the visual integrity of rolling hill areas which have retained an upland character</p> <p>LCA 31 Continue to facilitate appropriate development, in an incremental and clustered manner, where feasible, that respects the scale, character and sensitivities of the local landscape, recognising the need for sustainable settlement patterns and economic activity within the county</p> <p>LCA 32 Continue to permit development that can utilise existing infrastructure, whilst taking account of local absorption opportunities provided by the landscape, landform and prevailing vegetation</p> <p>Policy Objectives for Views and Prospects</p> <p>SV 1 Protect views from designated scenic routes indicated in Table 11.7 and Map 11.8 (Scenic Views and Prospects in County Laois) of the Plan, by avoiding any development that could disrupt the vistas or disproportionately impact on the landscape character of the area, thereby affecting the scenic and amenity value of the views.</p> <p>SV 2 Review and update all Scenic Routes and Views in the county during the lifetime of the Plan.</p> <p><b>Offaly County Development Plan</b></p> <p>Wind Farms</p> <p>It is Council policy that in assessing planning applications for wind farms, the Council shall:</p> <p>(a) have regard to the provisions of the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006, the Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change 2017 and the Draft revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 which are expected to be finalised in the near future;</p> <p>(b) have regard to 'Areas Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Developments' in the Wind Energy Strategy Designations Map from the County Wind Energy Strategy;</p> <p>(c) the impact of the proposed wind farm development on proposed Wilderness Corridors as detailed in Objective BLO-28 of Chapter 4;</p> <p>(d) have regard to Development Management Standard 109 on wind farms contained in Chapter 13 of this Plan; and</p> <p>(e) have regard to existing and future international, European, national and regional policy, directives and legislation.</p> <p>Extractive Industry</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure those extractions (quarries / sand and gravel pits) which would result in a reduction of the visual amenity of Areas of High Amenity, eskers, esker landscapes, protected views or damage to designated sites, habitat types or species shall not be permitted. It is Council policy that all such workings should be subjected to landscaping requirements and that worked out quarries should be rehabilitated to a use agreed with the Council which could include recreational, biodiversity, amenity or other end-of-life uses. Planning applications for extraction shall be assessed against</p> |

## SEA Statement for the Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| Topic | Potentially Significant Adverse Effect, if Unmitigated | Joint Local Area Plan measures, including: | Existing Laois and Offaly County Development Plan measures, including:   |
|-------|--|--|--|
|       |  |  | <p>section 28 Ministerial Guidelines. The use of these rehabilitated sites shall be limited to wastes such as soil, stone and subsoils and sites shall be authorised under the appropriate waste regulations. Where the Council considers and accepts that in cases where inert material (for example soil, stones and subsoil) cannot be recycled or otherwise sold, such materials may be considered for the phased restoration and landscaping of the site in line with planning conditions imposed.</p> <p><b>Landscape</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to protect and enhance the county's landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the county's existing landscape.</p> <p>It is Council policy to seek to ensure that local landscape features, including historic features and buildings, hedgerow, shelter belts and stone walls, are retained, protected and enhanced where appropriate, so as to preserve the local landscape and character of an area, whilst providing for future development.</p> <p>It is Council policy to ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity is an important factor in determining development uses.</p> <p>It is Council policy to require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany significant proposals, located within or adjacent to sensitive landscapes. This assessment will provide details of proposed mitigation measures to address likely negative impacts.</p> <p>It is Council policy to control advertising structures and hoardings in the open countryside. The Council will use its enforcement powers under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to secure the removal of unauthorised advertising signs and hoardings including those that are affixed to trailers, wheeled vehicles etc.</p> <p><b>Landscape</b></p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to prepare a County Landscape Character Assessment in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance documents and following the forthcoming National and Regional Landscape Character Assessment.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to have regard to the Landscape Sensitivity Areas in Tables 4.18, 4.19 and 4.20 in the consideration of planning applications.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to protect skylines and ridgelines from development where such developments will create significant visual intrusion.</p> <p><b>Protection of Key Scenic Views, Key Prospects and Key Amenity Routes</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany significant proposals that are likely to significantly affect Key Scenic Views and Prospects as listed in Table 4.21 and Key Amenity Routes as listed in Table 4.22.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to protect Key Scenic Views and Key Prospects contained in Table 4.21, and Key Amenity Routes as listed in Table 4.22 from inappropriate development.</p> <p><b>Areas of High Amenity</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to protect and preserve the county's Areas of High Amenity namely the Slieve Bloom Mountains, Clonmacnoise Heritage Zone, Durrow High Cross, Abbey and surrounding area, the River Shannon, Lough Boora Discovery Park, Grand Canal, Croghan Hill, Raheenmore Bog, Pallas Lake, Clara Bog, Clara eskers, Eiscir Riada and other eskers. Notwithstanding the location of certain settlements, or parts of, for which there are settlement plans (Towns, Villages, Sráids), within the Areas of High Amenity, it is not the intention of this policy to hinder appropriate sustainable levels of development (as set out in the plans and subject to proper planning). Further, it is policy to facilitate the sustainable extension and expansion of existing visitor, tourist related or other rural enterprises within the Areas of High Amenity, where such development is appropriate and where it can be demonstrated that it gives 'added value' to the extending activity and to the immediate area which is the subject of the 'Area of High Amenity' designation.</p> <p>It is Council policy, to ensure that issues of scale, siting, design and overall compatibility (including particular regard to environmental sensitivities) with a site's location within an Area of High Amenity are of paramount importance when assessing any application for planning permission. The merits of each proposal will be examined on a case-by case basis.</p> <p>It is Council policy to support the preparation of a masterplan that conserves and protects the Clonmacnoise monastic site and will co-operate with the Office of Public Works and other stakeholders in its preparation and implementation.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to ensure that new development, whether individually or cumulatively, does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of or the scenic value of the Areas of High Amenity listed in Table 4.17. New development in Areas of High Amenity shall not be permitted if it;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causes unacceptable visual harm;</li> <li>• Introduces incongruous landscape elements; and</li> <li>• Causes the disturbance or loss of (i) landscape elements that contribute to local distinctiveness; (ii) historic elements that contribute significantly to landscape character and quality such as field or road patterns; (iii) vegetation which is a characteristic of that landscape type and (iv) the visual condition of landscape elements.</li> </ul> |



## Section 3 Environmental Report and Submissions/ Observations

### 3.1 Introduction

This section details how both the Environmental Report and submissions and observations made to Laois and Offaly County Councils on the Environmental Report and SEA process have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan and the SEA.

include reference to Shaping Our Electricity Future 1.1.

- To amend Appendix I of the SEA Environmental Report to remove reference to Grid25 and associated Implementation Programme and include reference to Shaping Our Electricity Future 1.1.

### 3.2 SEA Scoping Notices and Submissions

As part of the scoping process for preparation of the Plan, environmental authorities<sup>3</sup> were notified that a submission or observation in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report could be made to the Council. No SEA Scoping Submissions were received.

For further information on how submissions were considered, refer to the Chief Executive's Reports on submissions received on the Draft Plan and associated documents and the Chief Executive's Reports on submissions received on the Proposed Material Alterations and associated documentation – available at [www.laoiscoco.ie](http://www.laoiscoco.ie) and [www.offalcoco.ie](http://www.offalcoco.ie).

All parts of the Plan-preparation process were informed by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes - this includes the preparation of the Draft Plan, Proposed Material Alterations and Further Modifications. The mitigation integrated into the final, adopted Plan includes that identified at Table 2.1 of this report.

### 3.3 Submissions on the Environmental Report for the Draft Plan

Various submissions were made on the Draft Plan, Proposed Material Alterations and/or associated environmental assessment documents, including the SEA Environmental Report and AA/SFRA documents, while these documents were on public display.

Updates made to the Plan and associated environmental assessment documents on foot of submissions include:

- To update text in Section 8.2 "Cumulative Effects" of the SEA Environmental Report to remove reference to Grid25 and associated Implementation Programme and

### 3.4 SEA documents including SEA Environmental Report

The Draft Plan and accompanying documents (including SEA Environmental Report and AA and SFRA documents) were placed on public display, having integrated various recommendations arising from the SEA, AA and SFRA processes. Responses to submissions made during the public display of the Draft Plan and associated SEA, AA and SFRA documents were integrated into Chief Executive's Reports and considered by Laois and Offaly County Councils.

A number of material alterations were proposed after public display of the Draft Plan. The Proposed Material Alterations were subject to SEA and Screening for AA. Responses to submissions made during the public display of the Proposed Material Alterations and associated SEA, AA and SFRA

<sup>3</sup> The following authorities were notified: Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Environment, Climate and Communications; Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Galway County Council; Roscommon County Council; Westmeath County Council; Meath County Council; Kildare County Council; Carlow County Council; Kilkenny County Council; and Tipperary County Council.

documents were integrated into Chief Executive's Reports and considered by Laois and Offaly County Councils. Further modifications were considered by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes.

On adoption of the Plan, the Environmental Report that had been placed on public display alongside the Draft Plan was updated to become a final Environmental Report that is consistent with the adopted Plan, taking into account all changes that were made to the original Draft Plan that was placed on public display.

## Section 4 Summary of Alternatives considered

### 4.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternatives (taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme) are identified, described and evaluated for their likely significant effects on the environment. Summaries of the alternatives for the Plan and their assessment are provided below.

### 4.2 Limitations in Available Alternatives

The Plan is required to be prepared by the existing, already in force, Laois and Offaly County Development Plans and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), which specifies various types of objectives that must be provided for by the Plan.

The alternatives available for the Plan are significantly limited by the provisions of higher-level planning objectives, including those of the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands Region and the County Plans.

### 4.3 Alternatives Already Considered

The preparation of the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans and associated SEA processes already considered various different types of alternatives. The selected alternatives for the County Development Plans set requirements for lower tier planning in the Counties and have been integrated into the Joint Local Area Plan, as appropriate.

### 4.4 Local Transport Plan Alternatives

- **Local Transport Plan Alternative 1:** Inform the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes.
- **Local Transport Plan Alternative 2:** Do not inform the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, relying solely on existing provisions, including those included as part of the County Development Plans.

Informing the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, (**Area Based Transport Assessment Alternative 1**) would provide a more coordinated and more orderly provision of transport infrastructure and services, with delivery of projects, and associated benefit with respect to sustainable mobility and compact development, more likely. This approach would be more likely to improve the potential for meeting important objectives relating to emissions and energy use. Potentially adverse impacts on environmental components including ecology and water would need to be adequately mitigated at project level.

Not informing the Plan with a Local Transport Plan, which focuses on delivering travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, (**Area Based Transport Assessment Alternative 2**) would provide a less coordinated and less orderly provision of transport infrastructure and services, with delivery of projects, and associated benefit with respect to sustainable mobility and compact development, less likely. This approach would be less likely to improve the potential for meeting important objectives relating to emissions and energy use. Potentially adverse impacts arising from more coherently planned transport developments on

environmental components, including ecology and water, could be mitigated at both JLAP and project level.

#### Selected Local Transport Plan Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1

## 4.5 Transport Infrastructure Alternatives

In integrating provisions relating to the provision of transport infrastructure into the Plan, the following alternatives were considered:

- **Transport Infrastructure Alternative 1:** Provide new transport infrastructure with all additional environmental mitigation left to be defined until project level.
- **Transport Infrastructure Alternative 2:** Provide new transport infrastructure, subject to environmental constraints, including those related to habitats and potential impacts such as disturbance from lighting – includes minimising river crossings, avoiding sensitive habitats, not increasing barriers to flood waters and sustainable design and construction techniques.

Under **Transport Infrastructure Alternative 1**, new transport infrastructure would be considered subject to environmental constraints, including those related to habitats and potential impacts (e.g. disturbance from lighting). This would include minimising river crossings, avoiding sensitive habitats, not increasing barriers to flood waters and sustainable design and construction techniques. By focusing on mitigation at both plan and project levels, Alternative 1 would offer the most certainty for environmental protection and management and would be more likely to result in important individual projects (relating to sustainable mobility and emissions/energy objectives) receiving permission.

Under **Transport Infrastructure Alternative 2**, all additional environmental mitigation would be left to be defined in the future, at project level. This would offer the least certainty for environmental protection and management and would be more likely to result in important individual projects (relating to sustainable mobility and emissions objectives) not been given permission.

#### Selected Transport Infrastructure Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1

## 4.6 Ecosystem Services Approach Alternatives

The importance of fulfilling natural capital<sup>4</sup> and ecosystem<sup>5</sup> service obligations has increasingly emerged in recent years. An Ecosystems Services Approach would provide a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. An Ecosystems Services Approach would include the integration of ecological considerations at a local level across the Plan area.

- **Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 1:** A Plan that follows an Ecosystems Services Approach to a greater degree.
- **Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 2:** A Plan that that does not follow, or follows to a lesser degree, an Ecosystems Services Approach.

**Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 1** would integrate a strategy throughout the Plan for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Principles that would be integrated throughout the Plan, in a coordinated and comprehensive manner, would include:

- Consideration of natural systems - by using knowledge of interactions in nature and how ecosystems function;

<sup>4</sup> Renewable and non-renewable resources (e.g. plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals).

<sup>5</sup> Ecosystems are multifunctional communities of living organisms interacting with each other and their environment. Ecosystems provide a series of services for human well-being (ecosystem services) either directly or indirectly contributing towards human wellbeing.



- Taking into account of the services that ecosystems provide - including those that underpin social and economic well-being, such as flood and climate regulation or recreation, culture and quality of life; and
- Involving people - those who benefit from the ecosystem services and those managing them need to be involved in decisions that affect them.

This would mean that there would be:

- An increased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of positive effects occurring with regard to natural capital and ecosystem service issues, such as the management of air quality, noise pollution, light pollution, pollination, flood risk, water bodies and river basins and natural resources supporting energy production and recreation; and
- A decreased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of adverse effects on natural capital and ecosystem services.

**Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative 2** would not integrate a strategy throughout the Plan for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

As has been the case over previous plan periods, many natural capital and ecosystem service issues would be integrated into individual Plan Policy Objectives and into decision making at lower tiers of plan preparation and development management. However, this approach would be less coordinated and comprehensive than would be the case under an Ecosystems Services Approach.

This would mean that there would be:

- A decreased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of positive effects occurring with regard to natural capital and ecosystem service issues; and
- An increased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of adverse effects on natural capital and ecosystem services.

Selected Ecosystem Services Approach Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1

## 4.7 Built Heritage Alternatives

- **Built Heritage Alternative 1:** A Plan that adds detailed, local-level provisions to the existing planning framework relating to the conservation of built heritage.
- **Built Heritage Alternative 2:** A Plan that does not add detailed, local-level provisions to the existing planning framework relating to the conservation of built heritage, relying solely on existing provisions, including those included as part of the County Development Plans.

A Plan that adds detailed, local-level provisions to the existing planning framework relating to the conservation of built heritage (**Built Heritage Alternative 1**) would further contribute the protection of existing heritage that is already contributed towards by the existing planning framework. By integrating heritage considerations into the Plan, Alternative 1 would be most likely to ensure that new development respects the historic grain of the built environment and archaeology that currently exists.

A Plan that does not add detailed, local-level provisions to the existing planning framework relating to the conservation of built heritage, relying solely on existing provisions, including those included as part of the County Development Plans (**Built Heritage Alternative 2**) would not further contribute the protection of existing heritage that is already contributed towards by the existing planning framework. By not integrating heritage considerations into the Plan, Alternative 2 would be least likely to ensure that new development respects the historic grain of the built environment and archaeology that currently exists.

Selected Built Heritage Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1

## 4.8 Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternatives

Alternatives under this heading relate to Opportunity Sites across the Plan area.

- **Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 1:** Do not include specific key planning criteria for future for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites; development would be market-led and would seek to comply with relevant planning provisions in the absence of additional guidance.
- **Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 2:** Include specific key planning criteria for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites, but which allow for flexibility in areas such as final design, layout and uses.
- **Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 3:** Include Opportunity Sites that would outline specific key planning criteria (which would not allow for flexibility in areas such as design, layout and uses) for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites.

A Joint Local Area Plan for Portarlington would help to direct incompatible development away from the most sensitive locations in the wider County areas and to focus on directing compact, sustainable development within and adjacent to the existing built-up footprint of Portarlington. Development of areas within and adjacent to the existing built-up footprint of Portarlington, which is generally more robust, better serviced and better connected than other lands elsewhere in the wider County areas, would contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Compact development would be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable Portarlington to become a more desirable place to live – so it can sustainably accommodate new residents and maintain and improve services to existing and future communities.

Not including specific guidance for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites (**Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 1**) would reduce the likelihood of sustainable development. Development would be market-led and would seek to comply with relevant planning provisions in the absence of additional guidance. The sustainable development of the Plan area would be less likely than under Alternative 2.

By including specific guidance for Opportunity Sites while, at the same time, allowing for flexibility in areas such as final design, layout and uses, for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites, **Alternative 2** would increase the likelihood of sustainable development.

Including Opportunity Sites that would outline specific key planning criteria (which would not allow for flexibility in areas such as design, layout and uses) for future planning applications at Opportunity Sites (**Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative 3**) would increase the potential to hinder compliance with rigid criteria in the longer term, in a context of evolving market needs and planning requirements.

Selected Approach to Opportunity Sites Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 2

### 4.8.1 Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternatives

Two alternatives for compact development/land use zoning are identified as follows (there are various alternative components under each alternative):

- **Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative 1: “More Consolidated, More Compact Development”**

Under this Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative, the town would reach its population allocation under the core strategies as contained in the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans.

The approach under this alternative would allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree.

The infrastructure required to be in place to achieve the growth targets is already in place or planned under this alternative.

The development of central and adjacent areas would be more compact and sustainable under this scenario and would better support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of residential units would be expected to take place within the existing built-up footprint on infill and/or brownfield sites, with a greater focus on use of consolidation and regeneration sites, with potential for wider regeneration benefits to the town centre, including housing provision. Regeneration, reuse and redevelopment of more central and brownfield and infill lands and optimising the use of vacant, derelict, and underutilised sites and buildings would be more likely to be achieved.

Giving a strong preference to lands that have both greater capacity to satisfy the principles of active travel and a more realistic opportunity of being developed over the lifetime of the Plan and giving a focus to Opportunity Sites (with clear design and uses identified – making successful applications for the sustainable, compact development of the town more likely) would allow for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town as envisaged by the wider planning framework to the greatest degree.

There would be greater potential and viability for integrated land use and transportation under this alternative, including proximate development patterns linked by active travel infrastructure and public transport. Associated benefits and improvements to the public realm and appearance of the built environment, including liveability and quality of life improvements, would be more likely.

This Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative would make the greatest contribution towards the protection and management of the environment by facilitating development of lands (including those within central and adjacent areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. There would be a reduced need for greenfield land consumption under this alternative. This Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative would be considered the most effective out of both Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternatives considered in the delivery of a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient future for the town.

The approach under Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative 1 'More Consolidated, More Compact Development' would benefit the protection of various environmental components. Although potentially adverse effects associated with land use development would exist, they would be mitigated to a significant degree. Less residual environmental effects would result.

Under this alternative there would be:

- More optimum use of land and resources, with positive role for addressing climate change, such as potential for reduced carbon heavy travel patterns.
- Greater potential for modal shift to sustainable travel such as walking, cycling and public transport, with knock on benefits for climate resilience in the Plan area.
- Use of already serviced lands in more central and built-up urban area could lead to potential reduced costs for delivery of new supporting infrastructure.
- Creation of more liveable built environments, with greater accessibility to services and amenities for local communities.

- **Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative 2 “Less Consolidated, Less Compact Development”**

Under this Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative, the Town would reach its population allocation under the core strategies as contained in the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans.

The approach under this alternative would not allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree.

Additional infrastructure would be required to accommodate sporadic development, more than would be required for Alternative A ‘More Consolidated, More Compact Development’ and some development may have to be serviced by private waste water treatment systems which would have to be properly maintained.

The development of the Town and Outer Core areas would be less compact and less sustainable under this scenario and would not optimally support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of residential development would be less likely to be achieved within the existing built-up footprint on infill and/or brownfield sites in comparison with Alternative A ‘More Consolidated, More Compact Development’. Under this alternative there would be potential for greater proportion of housing to be delivered outside of the built-up area, including on urban fringe and outer suburban areas and on greenfield sites, creating unsustainable travel patterns with a reliance on the private car. Giving less of a preference to lands that have both greater capacity to satisfy the principles of active travel and a more realistic opportunity of being developed over the lifetime of the Plan and giving less of a focus to Opportunity Sites (there would be no clear guidance on the design parameters or uses provided – making successful applications for the sustainable, compact development of the town less likely) would allow for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town as envisaged by the wider planning framework to a lesser degree.

There would be greater potential for negative impacts on the vitality and viability of the built-up area (including Town and Outer Core areas), due to increased and sustained levels of vacancy and dereliction for existing buildings and brownfield lands. This alternative would be likely to result in a more dispersed pattern of low-density urban development, that would be more difficult to serve with active travel infrastructure and public transport.

This Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative would make less of a contribution towards the protection and management of the environment by facilitating development of lands (including those town centre and adjacent areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services. Demand to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area would be provided for. This Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative would be considered the least effective out of both Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternatives considered in the delivery of a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient future for the town.

The approach under Alternative 2 ‘Less Consolidated, Less Compact Development’ would benefit the protection of various environmental components to a lesser degree. Although potentially adverse effects associated with land use development would exist, they would be mitigated to in many cases; however, more residual environmental effects would result.

Under this alternative there would be:

- An increase in car dependency and associated carbon heavy travel patterns, which would undermine efforts aimed at securing climate resilience.
- Increased suburban pattern of residential development with potential for self-contained and disconnected built environments.



- Reduced potential for modal shift to sustainable travel options such as walking, cycling and public transport.
- Potential for increased costs associated with the delivery on new supporting infrastructure (roads, footpaths etc.) in more peripheral and outer suburban areas.
- Increased costs for the delivery of necessary supporting infrastructure for urban fringe, outer suburban areas and greenfield sites.

Selected Compact Development/Land Use Zoning Alternative for the Plan: Alternative 1 "More Consolidated, More Compact Development"

## **4.9 Reasons for Choosing the Selected Alternative in light of Other Reasonable Alternatives Considered**

Selected alternatives for the Plan from each of the types of alternatives that emerged from the planning/SEA process are indicated above.

These alternatives have been integrated into the adopted Plan having regard to both:

- The environmental effects which were identified by the SEA and are summarised above; and
- Planning – including social and economic – effects that were also considered.

## Section 5 Monitoring Measures

### 5.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. This section details the measures which will be used in order to monitor the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan.

Monitoring can both demonstrate the positive effects facilitated by the Plan and can enable, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action.

The occurrence of significant adverse environmental effects not predicted and mitigated by this assessment, which are directly attributable to the implementation of the Plan, would necessitate consideration of these effects in the context of the Plan and potential remediation action(s) and/or review of part(s) of the Plan.

### 5.2 Indicators and Targets

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives that were used in the evaluation. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the target(s) which were identified with regard to the relevant strategic actions. Given the position of the Joint Local Area Plan in the land use planning hierarchy beneath the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, the measures identified in those County Development Plan SEAs have been used as they are or having been slightly modified – in most instances. This consistency across the hierarchy of land use plans will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring.

Table 5.1 shows the indicators and targets which have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated.

Monitoring is an ongoing process and the programme allows for flexibility and the further refinement of indicators and targets.

The Monitoring Programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues – including unforeseen effects – as they arise.

### 5.3 Sources

The Plan forms part of the wider land use planning framework comprising a hierarchy of policies, plans, programmes, etc. This wider framework, including the National Planning Framework, the Eastern and Midland RSES, the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, is subject to its own SEA (and associated monitoring) requirements. Individual projects will be subject to their own monitoring requirements as relevant.

In implementing the Monitoring Programme, the Councils will take into account this hierarchy of planning and environmental monitoring.

Sources for indicators may include existing monitoring databases (including those maintained by planning authorities and national/regional government departments and agencies) and the output of lower-tier environmental assessment and decision making (including a review of project approvals granted and associated documents and the output of any EIA monitoring programmes).

Internal monitoring of the environmental effects of grants of permission in the Councils would provide monitoring of certain indicators on a *grant of permission*<sup>6</sup> basis. Where significant adverse effects as a result of the development to be permitted are identified, such effects could be identified, recorded and used to inform monitoring evaluation.

<sup>6</sup> The likely significant effects of development proposals on environmental sensitivities are further determined during the development management process. Documenting any identified effects as a result of a development to be permitted can help to fulfill monitoring requirements.

## 5.4 Reporting

A stand-alone Monitoring Report on the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan will be prepared in advance of the beginning of the review of the Plan. Monitoring frequencies of indicators tend to change although where they are consistent frequencies are identified. This report should address the indicators set out on Table 5.1.

The methodology for monitoring set out below will be undertaken by the Councils. Where monitoring beyond existing sources is to be undertaken, it is recommended that industry standard methods are used where they exist and where appropriate.

Reporting may be undertaken in conjunction with the monitoring reporting on other plans, such as the County Development Plans and other Local Area Plans.

The Councils are responsible for the ongoing review of indicators and targets, collating existing relevant monitored data, the preparation of monitoring evaluation report(s), the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of remedial action.

**Table 5.1 Indicators, Targets, Sources and Remedial Action**

| Environmental Component              | SEO Code | Indicators  | Targets   | Sources   | Remedial Action   |
|--------------------------------------|----------|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b> | BFF      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Condition of European sites</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions in their land use plans and as a minimum, to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species</li> <li>Implement and review, as relevant, Local Biodiversity/Heritage Plans</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DHLGH report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years)<sup>7</sup></li> <li>DHLGH National Birds Directive Monitoring Report for the under Article 12 (every 6 years)<sup>8</sup></li> <li>Consultations with the NPWS<sup>9</sup></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where condition of European sites is found to be deteriorating this will be investigated with the Regional Assembly and the DHLGH to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.</li> </ul> |
|                                      |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions in their land use plans and as a minimum, to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species</li> <li>Implement and review, as relevant, Local Biodiversity/Heritage Plans</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal review of local land use plans</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review internal systems</li> </ul>   |
|                                      |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEAs and AAs as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Screen for and undertake SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of preparation of local land use plans</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review internal systems</li> </ul>   |
|                                      |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Status of water quality in water bodies</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Included under Water below</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Included under Water below</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Included under Water below</li> </ul>  |
|                                      |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Laois County Development Plan Chapter 11 “Biodiversity and Natural Heritage” and Offaly County Development Plan Chapter 4 “Biodiversity and Landscape”</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Laois County Development Plan Chapter 11 “Biodiversity and Natural Heritage” and Offaly County Development Plan Chapter 4 “Biodiversity and Landscape”</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review internal systems</li> </ul>   |

<sup>7</sup> Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

<sup>8</sup> Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

<sup>9</sup> Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on European sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

## SEA Statement for the Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031

| Environmental Component            | SEO Code | Indicators  | Targets   | Sources   | Remedial Action   |
|------------------------------------|----------|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Population and Human Health</b> | PHH      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Laois County Development Plan Chapter 6 "Economic Development" and Offaly County Development Plan Chapter 5 "Economic Development Strategy"</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Laois County Development Plan Chapter 6 "Economic Development" and Offaly County Development Plan Chapter 5 "Economic Development Strategy"</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives</li> <li>Consultations with DCEE</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review internal systems</li> <li>Consultations with DCEE</li> </ul>  |
|                                    |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA</li> </ul>   |
|                                    |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO data</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Councils will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response.</li> </ul>   |
|                                    |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require all local level land use plans to include specific green infrastructure mapping</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal review of local land use plans</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review internal systems</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Soil (and Land)</b>             | S        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield (also relevant to Material Assets)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF</li> <li>In accordance with National Policy Objectives 3c of the National Planning Framework, a minimum of 30% of the housing growth targeted in any settlement is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement</li> <li>To map brownfield and infill land parcels</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EPA Geoportal</li> <li>Compilation of greenfield and brownfield development for the DHLGH</li> <li>AA/Screening for AA for each application</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where the proportion of growth on infill and brownfield sites is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the RSES, the Councils will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and coordinate actions to address constraints to doing so.</li> </ul>   |
|                                    |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instances where contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill must be disposed of</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal review of grants of permission where contaminated material must be disposed of</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultations with the EPA and Development Management</li> </ul>   |
|                                    |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental assessments and AAs as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Screen for and undertake environmental assessments and AA as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of grants of permission</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review internal systems</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Water</b>                       | W        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive, not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status'</li> <li>Implementation of the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance<sup>10</sup></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHLGH Water Section, the EPA Catchment Unit, the Regional Assembly and, as relevant, Uisce Éireann to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.</li> </ul> |

<sup>10</sup> Including monitoring of water quality and nitrogen deposition due to bioenergy and agricultural projects where available



| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Indicators   | Targets   | Sources  | Remedial Action  |
|-------------------------|----------|--|---|--|--|
|                         |          |  |   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Councils will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.</li> </ul> |
|                         |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where planning applications are being permitted on flood zones, the Councils will ensure that such grants are in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and include appropriate flood risk mitigation and management measures.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Material Assets</b>  | MA       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Uisce Éireann Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated</li> <li>Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan</li> <li>Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive</li> <li>Facilitate, as appropriate, Uisce Éireann in developing water and wastewater infrastructure</li> <li>See also targets relating to greenfield and brownfield development of land under Soil and broadband under Population and Human Health</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission Consultations with the Uisce Éireann</li> <li>DHLGH in conjunction with Local Authorities</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Councils will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.</li> </ul> |
|                         |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO data</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Councils will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Air</b>              | A        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels</li> <li>NO<sub>2</sub> (Nitrogen Dioxide), PM10 (particulate matter with diameter of 10 microns or less) and O<sub>3</sub> (Ozone) as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in proportion of journeys made by car compared to previous levels</li> <li>Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions</li> <li>Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO data</li> <li>Data from the National Travel Survey</li> <li>EPA Air Quality Monitoring</li> <li>Consultations with Department of Transport and Department of Environment, Climate and Communications</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response. See also entry under Population and human health above</li> </ul>  |

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| Environmental Component | SEO Code | Indicators   | Targets  | Sources  | Remedial Action  |
|-------------------------|----------|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Climatic Factors</b> | C        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of Plan measures relating to climate reduction targets</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to climate reduction targets</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review internal systems</li> </ul>  |
|                         |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy</li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring of Climate Action Plans 2024-2029</li> <li>EPA Annual National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory reporting</li> <li>Climate Action Regional Office</li> <li>Consultations with DCEE (at monitoring evaluation)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where targets are not achieved, the Councils will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.</li> </ul>                        |
|                         |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share of renewable energy in transport</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute towards the target of the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC), for all Member States to reach a 10% share of renewable energy in transport by facilitating the development of electricity charging and transmission infrastructure, in compliance with the provisions of the Plan</li> </ul> |  |  |
|                         |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenhouse gas emissions</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions of at least 51% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2030 (helping to set Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by 2050)</li> </ul>   |  |  |
|                         |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy consumption, the uptake of renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating</li> </ul>   |  |  |
|                         |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the settlement using private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels</li> <li>Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to sustainable mobility and travel</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO data</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where trends toward carbon reduction are not recorded, the Councils will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.</li> </ul> |
|                         |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures</li> <li>Progress in successfully implementing Plan measures relating to active travel</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO data</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DCEE and NTA to develop a tailored response.</li> </ul>       |

| Environmental Component  | SEO Code | Indicators  | Targets   | Sources   | Remedial Action  |
|--------------------------|----------|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Cultural Heritage</b> | CH       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan</li> </ul>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where monitoring reveals visitor or development pressure is causing negative effects on designated archaeological or architectural heritage, the Councils will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and the National Monuments Service and other stakeholders, as relevant, to address pressures through additional mitigation.</li> </ul> |
|                          |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation with DHLGH</li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>Landscape</b>         | L        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where monitoring reveals developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, the Councils will re-examine Plan provisions and the effectiveness of their implementation</li> </ul>  |